INDIA WINS FREEDOM

THE OTHER SIDE

by

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To the sacred memory of those who suffered and laid down their lives for the cause of freedom.

FOREWORD

Maulana Azad's *India Wins Freedom* is a product of his frustration and disappointment. He joined the Congress, became its president in 1940 and dreamt with Gandhi the dream of an independent Akhand Bharat in which he hoped to occupy an eminent position, wielding immense influence in the subcontinent when it became free, as the supreme leader of one hundred million Muslims. His dream was, however, not fulfilled since the Congress under Gandhi's leadership failed to achieve its objective.

The Maulana, of course, did not think much of the Muslim League or of Jinnah. He could not realise the strength of the Muslim League under the leadership of the Quaid-i-Azam. Nor did he realise that the support of entire Muslim population of the sub-continent was behind him and the Muslim League. In the hallucination of his dream, he allowed himself to a role which, for a time, created dissensions and confusion in the ranks of the Muslims and misled other nations in the world. The Muslim League under Quaid-i-Azam's leadership, however, grew immensely powerful and ere long became the only representative organization of the Muslims. From that position of strength, the League won its objective of India's independence on the basis of two independent sovereign states.

Maulana Azad's disappointment was very great. It shook him to his very being. For this, he blames Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and, for matter of that,

the whole lot of the Congress leaders. He simply could not stand the name of Jinnah. It should, therefore, not be surprising if his book contains mis-statements and distortions. In this context, the present volume of Mr. Abdul Wahid Khan is most welcome. It helps one to have a true historical perspective.

I have known Mr. Abdul Wahid Khan for over two decades now. He was my colleague in the Council of All-India Muslim League till 1947, and later, of the Council of the All-Pakistan Muslim League, and the first Constituent Assembly of Pakistan. Mr. Abdul Waheed Khan has long been a keen student of Indo-Muslim politics. Actually, the development of Muslim politics in India was the theme of one of his previous books entitled *Musalmanon ka ithar aur Azadi ki Jang*. Published in 1937, it was received enthusiastically throughout the length and breadth of Muslim India. The author has also several other publications to his credit.

The present book critically examines the story set forth by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in his *India Wins Freedom* and discusses in a systematic manner the events culminating in the freedom of India and Pakistan.

Yet, it is not merely a rectification of what has been misstated or misrepresented in *India Wins Freedom*. More importantly, it discusses in some detail the birth, progress and culmination of the Pakistan Movement. Although the author has been closely associated with the Muslim League and the Pakistan Movement, he has not let his personal affiliations deflect him from truth, colour his account or determine his conclusions. He has invariably docu-

mented his statements in order to clinch the issues in dispute and has presented an authentic story of Muslim struggle for freedom.

The book largely deals with three personalities and their doings: Azad, Gandhi and Jinnah. Representing as they did in their respective persons either the source of inspiration or the antithesis of Azad's politics since the late twenties, Gandhi and Jinnah become integral parts of Azad's story.

Maulana Azad, as is well known, was once a firm believer in Islamic ideology and culture. He wanted Muslims to be the sole architects of their destiny. He pleaded for maintaining Muslim individuality in Indian politics. He chided those who wanted Muslims to toe the Hindu line, and considered such a policy on Muslims' part as "degrading and disgraceful".

This was the line the Maulana took up in the *al-Hilal* days. However, in the post-Khilafat period, he came under the spell of Gandhi, and became a convert to the concepts of a composite Hindu-Muslim nation and a composite Indian culture. Gandhi's illusory charm so blinded him that he could not see through the truth.

For, Gandhi, when he talked of a composite Indian culture, actually meant Hindu culture. Likewise, when he talked of Indian nationalism, he really meant Hindu domination and Hindu rule. In his vocabulary, terms like "Ram Rajya" and "Purna Swaraj" were co-terminus with independence. Yet, the fact that Gandhi's nationalism was tarnished with Hinduistic notions and aspirations[1] should not surprise

1 See Dutt, R. Palme, *India Today and Tomorrow* (London, 1955), pp. 236-8. "At any moment throughout the modern national struggle Gandhi could pass from Congress politics to a Hindu reform movement (as in the crisis of the struggle in 1932-33) and vice versa" (pp. 237-8).

any one. Gandhi, who was all the time working for Hindu ascendency in India, was shrewd enough to realise, even from the start, that he could reach the heart of the Hindu masses, but through religious symbols.[1] He, therefore, "appeared throughout as the active leader of Hinduism and Hindu revival".[2]

By the twenties, Mr. Gandhi had won the confidence of the Hindus. About this time he embarked upon the task of winning the confidence of the Musalmans as well. And the Khilafat Movement in the twenties provided him the chance of a life-time to accomplish this task, difficult as it was.

Yet even when he aligned himself with an avowedly Muslim (Khilafat) Movement, the Hindu in Gandhi never for a moment receded in the background. Not only did he call himself a "Sanatani Hindu"[3] at the height of the Khilafat Movement, he also claimed to be serving his religion by taking up the Khilafat cause. "I claim that with us both," he said, "the Khilafat is the central fact, with Maulana Mohamed Ali because it is his religion, with me because, in laying down my life for the Khilafat I ensure safety of the cow, that is my religion, from the Musalman knife".[4] In the heat of the movement,

1 Cf. "Even some of Gandhiji's phrases sometimes jarred on me—thus his frequent reference to Rama Raj as a golden age which was to return. But I was powerless to intervene, and I consoled myself with the thought that Gandhiji used the words because they were well known and understood by the masses. He had an amazing knack of reaching the heart of the people." Nehru, Jawaharlal, *An Autobiography* (London, 1955), p. 72.

One would, however, like to qualify the words "masses" and "people" in this passage. Nehru obviously means Hindu masses and Hindu people; for, in no case, could the Muslims be reached by invoking *Ram Rajya*.

2 Dutt, p. 238.

3 *Young India*, October 12, 1921. See Dutt, p. 237, for Gandhi's own definition of a Sanatani Hindu; also for Nehru's.

4 *Ibid.*, October 20, 1921: cited in Ambedkar, B. R., *Pakistan or Partition of India* (Bombay, 1945), p. 140.

however, nobody bothered to look into the rationale of Gandhi's participation in the movement. In any case, "he carried the plan of winning over the Muslims to its culmination. Secondly, he made the Congress a power in the country, which it would not have been, if the Muslims had not joined it. The cause of the Khilafat appealed to the Musalmans far more than political safeguards, with the result that the Musalmans who were outside it trooped in the Congress".[1]

From this time onwards, Gandhi was accepted for a considerably long time as a national leader and claimed to represent the entire population of India. He claimed to work for the freedom of everyone in India, irrespective of race, colour and creed; yet when it came to conceding any safeguards for Muslims and other minorities, he would become indifferent. Such was his stand, for instance, at the Second Round Table Conference (1931) in London. And should the minorities win for themselves any safeguards in spite of him, he would resort to anything to trick them out of those safeguards. His fast (1932) which culminated in the Poona Pact is an instance in point. While on the one hand, he professed concern and love for the Scheduled Castes, he, on the other, would not concede them a separate status in the Indian body-politic. And what Gandhi could not achieve at the conference table, he achieved through this fateful fast. The Scheduled Castes leader, Ambedkar, was forced to abandon, on his community's behalf, the right to sparate electorate in the impending Government of India Act, 1935.

It is impossible to believe that Maulana Azad

1 Ambedkar, p. 142.

who was so closely associated with Gandhi, did not know the latter's objective and programme. Actually, he has dilated at length in his *India Wins Freedom* on Gandhi's inconsistencies and somersaults. Yet, during Gandhi's lifetime, he did not have the moral courage to call attention to them, or, as Mr. Abdul Waheed Khan's account shows, even to differ with him.

India Wins Freedom is thus a subtle attempt on the author's part to exonerate himself of all blame and to present a heroic account of his own doings. To achieve this, the Maulana has resorted to mis-statement of facts and falsification of history. Abandoning facts to the high winds, he has tried to put his own queer, though seemingly plausible, interpretations on them. Surprisingly enough, he has tried his level best to minimise the role of the Muslims of India in the freedom struggle of the country. It is most unfortunate that due to lack of proper publicity, the case of the Muslims of India has never been rightly understood by the world at large.

Disorganised and resourceless as they were, they not only had to face the powerful and organized forces of Hindu community, but they were also ideologically in direct clash with the prevalent and popular notions of democracy and freedom. On the contrary, the task of the Congress leaders was simple. They based their politics on the idea of "territorial nationalism" and started their fight against foreign domination, in order to secure power for the "Indians". They wanted to administer the country on the basis of western democracy, which in the context of Indian politics, meant Hindu majority rule. The outside world hardly knew the implications of such

an apparently innocuous and 'patriotic' move. Powerful and organized Hindu propaganda, backed by Hindu capitalists, continued for a long time to shut the real Indian situation from the eyes of the world. And it took them a long time before it realized that the so-called democracy in India meant a perpetual and irreplaceable Hindu rule, from which the Muslim and other minorities could never be redeemed. Those who have scant knowledge of the intricate and rigid caste system of the Hindu society could not possibly appreciate the serious and sinister consequences of "majority rule" in India.

All the Muslim parties and leaders from the beginning right up to the start of the Second World War thought in terms of security and safeguards. They considered Muslims a minority and always wanted certain safeguards. From 1906 to 1939 the Muslim League had been demanding but an honourable position for the Muslims under one common, Central Government, which would necessarily be dominated by an overwhelming Hindu majority. The Muslims wanted protection of their language, culture and religion and a substantial proportion in the share of the country's administration. But the narrow-minded and communal leadership of Hindus would not grant even that. They went on rejecting the Muslim demands for a few more seats either at the Centre, or in the provinces or for a coalition and composite form of government. If the Muslims agitated for their demands or refused to toe the Hindu line, they were dubbed by the Hindu leaders as 'reactionaries', 'tools of British imperialism' and what not. In this chorus, the Nationalist Muslims under Maulana Azad always

joined the Hindus most vociferously. The outside world was thus led to take the Congress as the symbol of freedom and the Muslim League as the greatest obstacle in the way of Indian freedom.

Nothing could, however, be far from truth. The Muslims had from the very beginning struggled against the foreign rulers and suffered the most. Yet, their sacrifices were thrown into oblivion. None seemed to remember that from 1757 (Battle of Plassey) to 1947 the Muslims had made tremendous sacrifices in the cause of freedom. They were persecuted by the British Government, deprived of their lands, of the very means of their sustenance, and even of their lives and honour under a planned and thought-out scheme. They rose in open revolt in 1857 and also launched a countrywide struggle in 1920. They had to migrate in thousands to Afghanistan. While the Congress passed resolutions of loyalty to the Crown in its annual sessions, and while Gandhi was recruiting soldiers for the British Army in the First World War,[1] the Muslim leaders were paying in terms of internment and fines the penalty for their anti-British activities.

Later, during the Khilafat and Non-Cooperation Movements they filled the jails of India. They joined hands with the Hindus and did everything in their power to create communal unity and harmony in the country. And this in spite of the fact that if power was transferred to India they would be in a permanent minority and would always remain at the mercy of the Hindus. They had thus gone all-out even to the point of self-destruction to free India from the yoke

1 Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *The History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. I (Bombay. 1935), p. 403f.

of foreign thraldom. And with that end in view, they extended, again and again, their hand of friendship towards the Hindus. The British could not be turned out without Hindu-Muslim unity. So they forgot the past many a time to collaborate with the Congress and other Hindu organizations.

But every time, from the Partition of Bengal (1905) to the Cabinet Mission Plan, the ship of unity foundered on the rock of obstinacy and the unaccommodating attitude of the Congress leaders.

The Congress leaders had always suffered from a defeatist mentality. They were scared of the very idea of organizing the Muslims under any Islamic name or banner. The Khilafat agitation, for instance, was abruptly suspended because of fear of Afghanistan. The Muslim League was denied the right of forming a Coalition Government with the Congress, because that might, they feared, give a fillip to the League ambitions. The Muslim mass contact programme of the Congress was organized to create division and rift in their ranks and to make them organisationally weak and ineffective. All the forces of oppression and tyranny at the command of the Congress ministries in the provinces were unleashed against the Muslims to demoralise them. Organized movements to convert them to Hinduism were started, but the result was just the reverse.

The Muslims, now awakened from their deep slumber, realised after 27 months of Congress rule that as a minority they could not survive even physically. They discovered that mere constitutional safeguards could not save them. At this stage Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah declared that the Muslims

were not a minority but a separate nation. He organized them systematically and scientifically. The world soon knew that the 100 million Muslims of India wanted a homeland of their own for which they were determined to fight to the last—to achieve Pakistan or else perish. The British and the Congress joined hands. They intrigued and manoeuvered against the League. But it was all in vain. It was impossible to check or suppress the Muslims who had trooped into the League, almost to a man. Ultimately, the cause of righteousness prevailed and the Anglo-Hindu imperialistic designs and machinations failed.

All these are facts of history. Yet the outside world is not fully aware of them; nor is it acquainted with the forces which created this largest Muslim State of Pakistan. Much less does it appreciate the significance of the two-nation theory which forms the basis of the creation of Pakistan.

It is most unfortunate that *India Wins Freedom* has not only suppressed the real contribution of the Muslims towards the cause of freedom, but has also twisted facts in order to paint the Muslim League and its leaders as impediments in the way of freedom. Mr. Waheed has ruthlessly disentangled the webs which the Maulana had woven to misrepresent history.

I, therefore, welcome Mr. Abdul Waheed Khan's attempt in the present volume to tell the real story of freedom and of Partition in a fair and factual manner, and commend it to all those interested in the real facts of that story.

FAZLUR RAHMAN

PREFACE

Maulana Azad's fame as a litterateur is immortal: his remarkable style as a writer and orator entitles him to a position of eminence in the literary history of our times. An eminent thinker and scholar of Islam, he was at one time very influential in the subcontinent. I have always had a great regard for his vast learning, and my admiration for his erudition has remained unshaken and unsullied by the political vicissitudes and ideological differences. I enjoyed his colourful writings even in those days of storm and stress when the Muslims frowned at the very name of Azad.

His last book, *India Wins Freedom,* was published about the end of 1958. Originally the book was dictated by him to his secretary, Professor Humayun Kabir, in Urdu, who rendered it in English during the lifetime of the late Maulana, and got his approval. It has, therefore, the same position and status as any other original work of Azad. It relates in detail the story of the last phase of India's stuggle for freedom and the circumstances preceding the partition of the subcontinent. The author has made a complete survey of the progress of events from 1937 to 1947.

From 1912 Maulana Azad has throughout occupied a high position as a politician and scholar in the country. Therefore, his spoken and written words have naturally a significance and importance, all their own. That was why *India Wins Freedom* was read with keen interest in both India and Pakistan, and was widely commented upon. It is, however, not an objective study of the problem, or an altogether impartial narration of historical facts, but is a presentation of his case, an account of his political activities and, lastly, an explanation and an apology for his role as a nationalist Muslim. In interpreting facts and commenting upon the views, policies and objectives of leaders and parties, the Maulana has relied very largely on his subjective preferences and prejudices.

To some extent it is justifiable. An allowance must be made for the personal predilections and leanings in case of a politician-writer. Autobiographies, political diaries and memoirs of rulers and politicians are undoubtedly very valuable records of their times and provide the source material to the future historian. Nevertheless, for reasons of personal likes and dislikes playing an important role in the psychology of persons, who are themselves party to the creation of history, which they undertake to record, compilation and interpretation of events by the leaders have never been recognized as conclusive or an impartial evidence of the authenticity of their version on the contemporary events. While a political leader would narrate his personal experiences, would give his own version of the inner stories and behind-the-curtain activities, the primary duty and function of a historian is to exclude his personal role, reject private information and build his edifice on the

material supplied by other reliable and independent sources. Only then can he claim to be an impartial historian. To the first category, however, does *India Wins Freedom* belong.

Though the book has made interesting revelations about the colleagues and co-workers of the author, yet the central idea is to prove that the Muslim League was a reactionary body, that Jinnah was an obstacle in the way of freedom, that the demand of Pakistan was wrong and that it was in any case a gift from the British. Such assertions and statements, especially when they are made by a Muslim scholar and divine of Azad's calibre, shut out from the eyes of the world the real role of the Muslims in the struggle for freedom of the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent, and the spirit underlying the Pakistan movement—unless the other side is presented before them.

An attempt has, therefore, been made in the following pages to set out the facts of history in their correct perspective, in a positive and constructive manner, both in a chronological and subjectwise order. The other side of the picture thus emerges in the story I have presented here, and the reader has an opportunity to acquaint himself with the background of the creation of the independent Islamic State of Pakistan.

One thing should be made clear at the very outset: this book has been compiled by me, not as a political worker, but as a student of history in an impartial manner. Not on one single occasion have I attempted to rebut or repudiate Maulana Azad on the basis of any personal experience, knowledge or

information, though I had had many. I hardly missed any League Council meeting or any other League gathering from 1937 till 1947. On various occasions, I have had opportunities of personal contact with the Quaid-i-Azam and other members of the Working Committee. Being an office-bearer and member of the Working Committee of U. P. Provincial Muslim League, I have been in possession of interesting information and have personal knowledge of many important political developments. But to them not a single reference has been made in this book. Maulana Azad has spoken in the first person. Only a colleague or a contemporary politician of a comparable rank could speak in that tone or tenor. My task, though difficult and arduous, has been to present the facts of history in a simple and straightforward manner. I have argued my case and interpreted events on the basis of independent impartial authorities, both Indian—mostly Hindu—and foreign. Even the statements and speeches of the Muslim League leaders, though quoted lavishly to link up events in their proper context, have not been used for the purpose of rebuttal of the late Maulana. Both represent diametrically opposite views, and one cannot be contradicted by the other. Azad's own writings have been reproduced on various occasions to clinch the issue.

The book is not merely a reverification or rectification of what has been misstated or misrepresented in *India Wins Freedom*. It is a complete and comprehensive historical survey of the Pakistan movement and its background. Practically no aspect of the political situation or constitutional developments has been ignored or excluded from my survey. I hope it

will help the readers, especially the foreigners, understand the background of the Muslim League movement that led to the establishment of Pakistan.

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June 22, 1961.

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Dr. S. Moinul Haq, who was my colleague in the U. P. Muslim League Council, almost considers it a religious duty to assist and serve every cause which is in any way connected with, or related to, the Pakistan movement. As soon as he learnt that I had engaged myself in the task of compiling this book he arranged for its printing and publication. His advice in the general scheme of the compilation was also very valuable. Moreover, he personally supervised the work in the press, and it is purely due to his efforts that the book could be produced in the present form. Indeed, I owe him a tremendous debt.

Mr. Mujahid was first introduced to me through an article contributed by him in 1946, on the ministry-making activities of Maulana Azad in the Punjab and elsewhere. He was then a student in the Madras University. A passage from his article is reproduced in the book. Mr. Mujahid read the manuscript and

helped me a great deal by his valuable advice and suggestions.

My thanks are also due to Mr. Erric Cyprene, Professor of English in the Islamia College, Lahore. He kindly read the preliminary draft of about three Chapters of the book. Though he did not agree with all my views, yet he assested me a great deal with his useful suggestions, and I was greatly benefited by his comments on various questions affecting the book.

Lastly, I am grateful to Mr. Fazlur Rahman who was closely associated with the Muslim struggle for freedom in the last phase, for undertaking to print the book on behalf of the publishers, and for writing the foreword to the book.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS AND ITS LEADERSHIP

THE portrait of the Indian National Congress and its leadership, as painted by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in *India Wins Freedom*, is instructive as well as interesting. The Congress which was the largest Indian political party, professed to work for the elimination of capitalism and feudalism and for the establishment of a socialist state. Maulana Azad has, however, debunked all Congress pretentions to a progressive economic programme. He points out that when the late Liaquat Ali Khan, as Finance Minister in the Interim Cabinet, presented the Budget most Congress leaders opposed it, although the Budget represented in all aspects the policy and principles which were vociferously professed by the Congress and which formed part of its election manifesto.

The Maulana's statement seems to imply that all protestations and promises of the Congress to remove social and economic inequities of the people were no more than mere slogans and vote-catching devices. As soon as they came to grips with the stark realities of the situation as it obtained then, and their claims

were put to test, they found themselves in difficulties. These assertions are supported by incontrovertible facts.

For instance, when the Congress assumed power in the United Provinces in 1937 it immediately sponsored the Abolition of Zamindari Bill in the Provincial Assembly. But, when a similar Bill was moved in the Bengal Assembly by the Muslim League Assembly Party, the Provincial Congress Parliamentary Party of Bengal not only voted against it, but also staged a walk-out in protest. This self-contradictory attitude was motivated by the simple fact that in Bengal the majority of the landlords was Hindu (while almost all the cultivators were Muslims) as against in U. P. where nearly 25 per cent. zamindars were Muslims (while the cultivators were predominantly Hindu).

When the Abolition of Zamindari Bill was being considered by the U. P. Assembly the Muslim League Parliamentary Party moved an amendment to the effect that a ceiling on private profits and investments and on the maximum capital-holding be also fixed. This amendment, reasonable though it was, was summarily rejected. The reason is, however, not far to seek. The Muslim percentage among the capitalists was almost nil. Justice and fairplay demanded that when the Muslim League was willing to support the Congress-sponsored Bill to eliminate landlordism, the Congress should not have pursued a narrow communal view in the matter of capitalism.

Similarly, when the late Sir Sikandar Hayat's Ministry in the Punjab took some legislative steps to fix the maximum rates of interest chargeable by money-lenders, as also to restrict their operations, the

Congress opposed them tooth and nail. The legislation was aimed at ameliorating the lot of the Punjab cultivators who were the victims of the notorious money-lenders. Yet the entire Hindu Press labelled the enactment as "Black Laws" because the cultivators were mostly Muslims and the money-lenders Hindus.

On the whole, Azad's book reveals that the Indian National Congress was merely another name for the person of Mahatma Gandhi. He was blindly followed and, in fact, worshipped, by many top Congress leaders. His word was law on almost every subject. No one dared oppose or differ with him except, of course, Rajagopalachari and Subhash Chandra Bose who had to pay the penalty of their 'arrogance' and had to leave the Congress. For that matter, the Congress High Command hardly took any decision till 1947 contrary to the will and desire of the Mahatma. The policy of the organisation, its decisions and its actions rested on the sweet will and sole discretion of the one man who was not even a primary member of the organisation. And everyone else followed him. It was in October 1934 that Gandhi announced his decision to renounce the primary membership of the Congress, the obiect being to make himself free from the discipline of the party, or more appropriately, to impose his super-constitutional authority on the Congress. He became, to use the words of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, "the permanent super-President"[1] and his will became the will of the Congress. He not only supervised and directed the proceedings of the Working Committee but was also in exclusive command of the organisation.

1 Jawaharlal Nehru, *Autobiography*, p. 132.

Maulana Azad has strongly deprecated and even ridiculed the tendency and tradition of the Congress leaders to tread with closed eyes the path laid down by the Mahatma. "I have always had," says he, "the feeling that these colleagues and friends did not exercise their own minds on most political issues. They were out-and-out followers of Gandhiji. Whenever a question arose they waited to see how he would react."[1]

But, then, what was Azad's own attitude, as President of the Congress, towards the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi? "My election," he said in a press interview soon after his election to Congress presidentship, "in fact, reflects full confidence of the people in the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, and is a conclusive proof of the fact that the country fully agrees with his programme."[2]

This statement is a frank admission by the Maulana himself of the fact that he had no political ideology or principle of his own apart from Gandhi's, and that he would faithfully and obediently carry out his behest. This nature of his leadership he affirmed time and again during his term of office as President of the Congress. For instance, in the concluding part of his presidential address at the Ramgarh Congress Annual Session in March 1940, he says:

> Sir, I will not take much of your time. I want to finish my speech. But before I do so, permit me to remind you of one basic fact that to-day all our successes are based on three things, namely, unity, discipline and confidence in the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. This is a leader-

1 *India Wins Freedom*, p. 95.
2 *Statesman*, February 2, 1940.

> ship which has built the glorious past of our movements and from this alone we can hope for a victorious future.

It is instructive to note here that this presidential address was delivered at a time when Mahatma Gandhi was pursuing those policies in regard to the Second World War which the Maulana in *India Wins Freedom* has ridiculed and characterised as foolish and unwise. It was in this Ramgarh Session that Mahatma Gandhi was not only formally invested with dictatorial powers to initiate the Civil Disobedience movement against the Government "at such times as Mr. Gandhi should choose, and at his sole direction,"[1] but an assurance was also held out to him of "complete obedience" of the nation. The Mahatma, who was thus made the Generallissimo of the Congress Army, had said on the occasion: "You cannot make me your general on your terms. Know, therefore, that I will insist on my conditions which are inexorable."[2]

It is also relevent to refer in this context to the part that Maulana Azad played in the well-known episode of Gandhi-Bose tussle in 1939. In January 1939, Subhas Chandra Bose was re-elected President of the Congress for the second term, securing 1,595 votes as against 1,396 of Pattabhi Sitaramayya. The latter was known as the candidate of Mahatma Gandhi. Though the election was held under the constitution of the Congress in a proper and formal manner, yet Gandhi declared that the defeat of Sitaramayya was his personal defeat. This was a

1 *Indian Annual Register*, 1940, p. 230.

2 Satyapal and Prabodh Chandra, *Sixty Years of Congress*, p. 322.

signal of war and the whole Congress camp except Bengal was turned into a hostile camp against Bose. Excepting Sarat Bose and Pandit Jawaharlal, all the members of the new Working Committee, nominated by Bose, including, of course, the Maulana, resigned. Why? Was this step motivated by any larger national interest or any ideological consideration? Or, was it dictated by the sole urge of blind obedience to the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi? That the object of resigning members was, firstly, to punish Bose for having defied the wishes of Mahatma Gandhi and, secondly, to demonstrate to the world that the Congress could not function without blindly following Mahatma's lead is amply borne out by the fact that within two months of his election Bose was made to face a formal motion moved in the A. I. C. C. by Pandit G. B. Panth expressing confidence in the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and the members of the Working Committee who had resigned, and directing the President at the same time "to follow Mahatma Gandhi's wishes while nominating new members to the Working Committee". Unable to face the situation, Bose ultimately resigned on April 29, 1939. The very next day, Babu Rajendra Parshad was elected President, who nominated to the new Working Committee all those members who had resigned earlier. Pandit Jawaharlal and Sarat Chandra Bose refused to serve on this Committee. But Maulana Azad was one of those twelve of the team who agreed to toe the Mahatma's line. Subhas Bose was subsequently disqualified to be a member of any elective body for three years.

This incident demonstrates beyond any shadow

of doubt how the Maulana himself was an active party to the building up of Mahatma Gandhi's personality, and to strengthening the trend in the Congress towards acceptance of his leadership blindfoldedly. How and to what extent, then, was the Maulana's own role different from that of the rest of the Congress leaders, whom he has so trenchantly criticised for their conduct in following Mahatma Gandhi blindly?

Incidentally, let us examine as to what was Mahatma Gandhi's programme for the implementation of which the Maulana was put up as a candidate for the Congress Presidency by Gandhiji as his own representative. As stated in the Maulana's presidential address the programme was to settle terms with the British Government, on behalf of the whole country —of course, ignoring the Muslim League and the communal question. He dwells on this subject at length in the following words:

> In the all pervading darkness of the time this is the only bright aspect of human nature, which does not let the 'Great Soul' of Mahatma Gandhi feel tired. He walks unhesitatingly, without in the least feeling weak in his position, into the door of mutual understanding and compromise, which is open to him. Many members of the British Cabinet have tried to assure the world that the past role of British imperialism has gone and today the British nation keeps in view only the cause of peace and justice. Which country will extend greater welcome to such a declaration than India? But the fact remains that British imperialism is obstructing the path of peace and justice even today as it did before the war. India's demand was a test of all such claims.

> Claims were tested on the touch-stone, but failed to assure us of their truth.
>
> Last September, when, after the declaration of war, Congress prepared her demands none of us ever visualised that the simple and clear demand, which was made on behalf of India and from which no group or section of the country differed, will be mixed up with the communal question. . . . Both in England and India efforts were made to confuse the political question of the time with the communal question and thus to cloud the real issue. Time and again attempts were made to silence the world by saying that the question of the minorities stood in the way of the settlement of the political question of India.

Mahatma Gandhi's programme, as is well known, was simply to bypass the Muslim League and strike a bargain on behalf of the whole country with the British Government, just as he had done in 1930-31 by entering into a pact (called the Gandhi-Irwin Pact) with the then Viceroy, Lord Irwin. The Congress had demanded a constitution of free India passed in an independent Constituent Assembly elected by people, in which, naturally, the Hindus were to be in a permanent majority. It was ideal strategy for the Congress to put forth this demand through a Muslim divine, whose election at that crucial time of negotiations between Indians and the British Government, was part of that strategy. And the Maulana played his part exceedingly well, which no Hindu leader could have possibly been able to do. Gandhi's whole strategy, however, came to no avail and the utility of electing a Muslim to Congress Presidentship was shortlived. For, barely two weeks after the Ramgarh

Session, the Muslim League, by adopting the Pakistan Resolution on March 23, 1940, took the country by storm.

In the beginning of 1946, on the return to power of the British Labour Party, the Congress pressed with renewed vigour the demand for ignoring the need for communal settlement. And this time they got a ready response from the Labour Prime Minister in the form of a formal announcement of policy in the House of Commons on March 15, 1946. Mr. Attlee, in utter disregard of all previous pledges and promises of the British Government, warned the minorities that "a minority cannot be allowed to place their veto on the advance of a majority". The Congress leadership was jubilant. Its reaction to this official declaration was at the time expressed by Sardar Patel in his statement on March 22, 1946. He commended the "sincerity" of the British Prime Minister, and said:

> For the first time in recent years, the British Government have changed their attitude regarding minorities. . . . I am glad that the British Prime Minister has now made it clear that no minority will be allowed to stop the progress of the majority. His declaration refers only to the Muslim League.
>
> The Congress will meet the legitimate demands of the minorities and provide them with all reasonable safeguards, but it cannot concede the impossible demand for the partition of India—the Pakistan demand of Mr. Jinnah.

We have referred here to this incident to pinpoint the striking resemblance in outlook and similarity of views between Maulana Azad and Sardar Patel. What Azad said in March 1940 to mark his protest

against the policy of the British Govenment was repeated in March 1946 by Patel in a different form, to express satisfaction at the changed policy of the Government. In fact, the crux of the two statements is the same: that is, to ignore the crying need for a communal settlement and to strike a direct deal with England on behalf of the whole country. Only thus could a permanent Hindu majority rule be established in India. And this ideal was the corner-stone of all the policies of Mahatma Gandhi, ever since he started to dominate the Indian political scene.

Be that as it may, what is more inexplicable is the fact that though the Maulana has repeatedly denounced the narrow policies of Patel, yet he was equally guilty of blindly pursuing the Mahatma's programme of side-tracking the communal problem.

Admittedly, the Maulana connived at and co-operated with Patel and Gandhi when they formulated and followed anti-Muslim and narrow-minded policies. Yet, he has chosen to be wiser after the event, and has condemned them for acts in the performance of which he himself was an active participant.

Wise after the event

The Maulana has also very candidly commented upon the various other aspects of the policies and decisions of the Congress and upon some peculiar methods adopted by Gandhiji. He has particularly exposed the strange and inexplicable role and attitude of Gandhiji regarding the war, and the Cabinet Mission. But the critics no less than the admirers of the Maulana are surprised as to why he concealed these facts from the public till the publication of his

book. Why did he not expose the blunders; absurdities and obstinacies of the Congress leaders when they, by their narrow outlook, communal behaviour and reactionary methods were obstructing the path of freedom? The differences that the Maulana had with the Congress leadership, which he has described in his book in detail, were neither private nor personal. Nor were the follies which the Congress leaders were constantly committing in the matter of the Hindu-Muslim settlement, in any way trivial. On the contrary, they related to the vital national question. They grew out of the most important policies and decisions of the Congress. Why, then, was the public kept in the dark at the time when the drama was being staged? Were the people not entitled to know the truth from the Congress President?

If the Maulana was convinced that Jawaharlal had acted unjudiciously by refusing to form a coalition ministry with the Muslim League in 1937, that the Mahatma was playing the Japanese game during the war, that the Cabinet Mission Plan was being sabotaged because the Hindus considered the Grouping Scheme contrary to their communal aspirations;—if the Maulana differed sharply with the Congress leadership on these crucial points (as he would have us believe in his last testament), why did he keep silent all the time? If the Cripps' proposals were rejected by the Congress because the Congress stalwarts suspected that they contained germs of Pakistan, or—as the Maulana points out—that the settlement of Hindu-Muslim question, or the Congress-League alliance, was being made a condition precedent to the independence of India, then why did the

Maulana, as the President of the Congress, convey to Sir Stafford Cripps the assurance that "The Congress Working Committee would consider the proposals only from an Indian point of view and it would take into consideration all sections of opinion before it came to a decision".[1]

Moreover, if the Maulana was of the opinion that civil disobedience during the war would not bring Indian independence any the nearer, if he was opposed to the terrorist "Quit India" movement launched by the Congress in response to the Resolution of August 8, 1942, and, furthermore, if he really believed that the movement would not further the cause of communal harmony and Indian independence, why did he not declare his views openly as Mr. Rajagopalachari did? Why did he support the Resolution at the A. I. C. C. meeting at Bombay against his conviction and judgment? After all, this attitude of the Maulana conforms to neither the Islamic nor the modern democratic concept of party "discipline". In fact, this was neither just nor honest. If anything, it tends to encourage evil.

The Maulana occupied a key position in the Congress as President, and this to boost up its claim to represent all sections of Indian population. In other words, to provide it with the masquerade of nationalism, his association and support were indispensable. And, but for him and his nationalist Muslim followers the Congress would have stood exposed as a communal organisation. He was thus in a position to influence its decisions under threat of resignation, if necessary—if only he had the will to exercise his full

1 *India Wins Freedom*, p. 55.

influence. It is quite likely that his timely protest and disapproval of the Congress decisions which he now characterises as unwise, wrong and foolish, would have changed the course of history, and the Muslims of India as a nation would have been in a happier and better position.

But the revelations now made by Maulana Azad can neither change the course of events nor unsettle the settled facts. They do, however, provide food for thought to those who, chiefly due to lack of firsthand information, had come to wrong conclusion thirteen years ago. They would also help one to understand the background of the partition of India.

That the Maulana did not appreciate that his versatile genius, his depth of knowledge, his acute intelligence and his clear vision had far greater potentialities, is indeed tragic. He allowed them to fade out and to be frittered away. Nature had generously bestowed on him a good many gifts. But his indifference, lack of courage and conviction and want of self-confidence held him back from the role which otherwise he was fully competent to play.

Would that the light of his erudition and intellect were combined with the fire of faith and a firm determination, which shone, albeit for a very short time, during the *Al-Hilal* period, the course of Indian history would have been different.

CHAPTER II

AZAD AS HISTORIAN

IN a letter published in the *Ghubar-i-Khatir*, Maulana Azad refers to egotism in literature and says:

> Human limitations are strange and unfathomable. We can protect our thoughts against everything except our ownselves. However much one may try to conceal ourselves under the cover of the Third and Second Person the shadow of the First Person still hovers over us. Wherever we go this shadow will relentlessly pursue us. What is the ego of a writer, a poet, a painter or an author? Just ignore for a while the concept of the "ego" in relation to philosophy. Also keep apart the notion of "self" used as a term of mysticism. Let us for the time being consider "ego" purely in the general sense of the word. You will find that this "ego" is nothing but an irrepressible and uncontrollable effervescence of the individual personality of the artist.

India Wins Freedom, according to his own telling description, is an effervescence of his own egotism, which he could neither repress nor control. He wanted to leave behind him a history of India's struggle for

freedom but he let his own egotism and wounded vanity determine the nature of that history. The result: the issue of Indian freedom which the author attempts to present as his final goal, is often lost in the exuberance of his sentiments and the exposition of his own personal notions and iodiosyncracies. His political opinions and beliefs, proclivities and prejudices strut about the pages of his history in the garb of historical facts. Indeed, his ego, which is often a wounded ego, is writ large on every page of his book. For that matter, he has hardly left any issue, not even the issues where he is a committed partisan, to the impartial verdict of the historian. He has arrogated to himself the role of both an advocate and a judge. Not only does he narrate, but he also decrees. And yet he insists on the supposed impeccability of his decisions and judgments in the light of his own interpretations of the post-partition events.

The title of "Quaid-i-Azam"—Azad and Jinnah

The Maulana belonged to a family of the *pirs* (Muslim saints) and from his childhood saw his father's disciples touch his feet. Perhaps he did not like this, but this action on the part of the disciples was perhaps instrumental in creating in him the desire to become an *imam* (of the Muslims). Throughout his life the picture of popular homage lurking in his mind conjured up visions of himself as an apotheosis looking down from his towering heights upon his flock below. At the time when he edited the *Al-Hilal,* he seemed to be reaching those heights. During this period, his publishers, for instance, hailed him as the "Quaid-i-Azam". The 1921 edition of his writings contains an introduction to a statement issued by the

Maulana on January 10, 1913, wherein Mr. Mushtaq Ahmad, the publisher of the brochure, makes the following observations:

> The Maulana's penetrating intellect was even in those days aware of what is happening to-day. A reformer or Quaid-i-Azam, in the real sense of the term, must have the quality to foresee correctly.

It is, however, an irony of history that the Maulana could never attain the status of a "Quaid-i-Azam" (great leader). After the Khilafat Movement, the leadership of the Muslims passed on, first, to the late Maulana Mohammad Ali and, later, to Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah. When Mr. Jinnah—who could neither equal the Maulana in erudition nor had undergone so much of physical suffering for the cause of Indian Independence as the Maulana did,—was popularly accepted and acclaimed by the Muslims as the "Quaid-i-Azam", his feelings were irreparably injured. His injured egotism which is reflected in the book at several places, becomes rather too apparent in one particular passage, wherein he takes Mahatma Gandhi to task for addressing Mr. Jinnah as "Quaid-i-Azam" in a letter. Even so, mere personal likes or dislikes cannot possibly change the course of history. Jinnah was ordained to belong to the immortal class of "great leaders" whereas Azad, with all his accomplishments, to stand at the bar of history as an accused. Strange though it may seem, it is nevertheless true that this position was of his own making. He gave in 1912 to his people a particular line of action and a way of thinking. But when the Indian Muslims actively responded to his call he said goodbye

to his own ideals and launched upon a journey in the opposite direction. Betimes, the gulf between him and the Muslim nation widened, and he soon found himself in the camp which, to the Muslims, was their enemies' camp.

On the other hand, Jinnah created his own nation, organised it and what is more, moulded himself on the pattern and texture of the faith and ideals which the Muslims had imbibed and absorbed through Iqbal, Azad and Jauhar.[1] When Jinnah told Gandhi, "We are a nation, with our own distinctive culture and civilisation, language and literature, art and architecture, names and nomenclature, sense of value and proportion, legal laws and moral codes, customs and calender, history and tradition, aptitudes and ambitions; in short we have our own distinctive outlook on life and of life. By all canons of international law we are a nation,"—they found in his declaration an echo, though in more moderate and modern terms, of the preachings of *Al-Hilal.*

Way back in 1912, Maulana Azad in his own characteristic style had told them:

> Islam is much greater and higher than the suggestion that its followers should pursue the Hindu line in framing their political policies. There can be nothing more degrading and disgraceful for the Muslims than to bow down before the political preachings of other people. They need not join any other party. They are ordained to invite the whole world to join their party and to lead the world, and they have actually led it for centuries, along their own path. If they stand before God the whole world will

1 The late Maulana Mohammad Ali Jauhar.

stand before them. Since their path is clearly laid out before them, why should they roam about knocking at the doors of others in search of a lost way? God makes them sublime. Why should they bow down their heads before others? They are God's party and God can never tolerate that they should bow their heads before others.

This is the policy of *Al-Hilal* and such is the destination to which we invite the Muslims. It is not the innovation of the human mind or a blind following of a human group. If the Muslim League wants to lead the Muslims it should adopt this straight path.

The tragedy was that when the nation and the Muslim League adopted the "right path", the Maulana himself had forsaken it, and had begun to pursue the opposite one. In the same direction, however, the Muslims continued their march—even without Azad. They had lost Azad, but they had gained Jinnah to lead them to the "right path". The result, however, was that very soon all the differences and distinctions between Jinnah and his people disappeared. In his thoughts and actions, the Muslims discovered the lost thread of *Al-Hilal* and *Comrade* and flocked around him. He became their spokesman and truly reflected their aspirations and thinking. While Azad's egotism was chained to Hindu leadership—which, in spite of his unstinted support and loyalty, placed him in the second row, and which, in spite of his seniority and services neither made him President nor Prime Minister of the country but glorified him with an ornamental and innocuous office of the ministership of Education,—the Muslims accepted Jinnah as the symbol of their unity, ambitions and aspirations.

These psychological factors apart, Mr. Jinnah's pungent description of the Maulana as a "show-boy" of the Congress atrociously and incurably injured the Maulana's vanity. As President of the Indian National Congress, Maulana Azad invited Mr. Jinnah to discuss with him the Hindu-Muslim question. The motive of the Congress in electing Maulana Azad as President of the Congress at a time when the Muslim League movement for the re-organisation of the Muslims was gaining momentum, and then in trying to arrange a conference between two Muslim leaders was obviously to hoodwink the world. It thus wanted to make the world believe that the Hindu-Muslim question actually did not exist and that the differences between the Congress and the League were party, not religious, differences. Mr. Jinnah saw through the trick and in the interests of the Muslims, not to speak of the Muslim League, it became incumbent on him to tell Maulana Azad rather bluntly that he was not a genuine representative of the Congress, but just a "show-boy" of that organization.

Naturally, Maulana Azad's vanity must have been injured by this reply; but Mr. Jinnah's remark was so apt that the Maulana could not even console himself by a retort. It appears that Mr. Jinnah's remark rankled in his heart till the last moment of his life. Maulana Azad's political conduct since then has been such as to give the impression that he was trying to live down the insult and to disprove the charge by gratuitous attempts at personal glorification. His book pitifully brings out his mortification and the impression is inescapable that it was this remark which prompted him to write the book. In fact, he never

feels tired of proving in the book that he was not a "show-boy" but that he enjoyed complete independence and powers as President of the Congress. Further, he would have us believe that the Congress could not do without him, that he alone was the source of light while Gandhi, Jawaharlal and others were like planets revolving round him. And, whenever the Congress took a wrong step, it was because his advice was not heeded in time!

A critical examination of the facts of history in their true perspective will prove beyond doubt that Mr. Jinnah had no personal quarrel with Maulana Azad. It was for political reasons that Jinnah had refused to recognize him as the representative of the Congress and meet him in that capacity or in the company of Mr. Gandhi, whom he rightly considered to be the leader of the Hindu community. We know that at the time of partition and even after, Mr. Jinnah twice met Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, who undoubtedly had a lesser status than Maulana Azad had in the Congress. If he could meet Abdul Ghaffar Khan he could as well have seen Maulana Azad also. But, then, his meeting Azad would have led to misleading world opinion on the Hindu-Muslim question.

Two years before this incident, Mahatma Gandhi in a communication to Jinnah (dated February 24, 1938) had said:

> So far as I am concerned just as on the Hindu-Muslim question I was guided by Mr. Ansari, now that he is no more in our midst I have accepted Maulana Abul Kalam Azad as my guide. My suggestion, therefore, to you is that conversation should opened in the first instance between you and Maulana Sahib.

Mr. Jinnah obviously could not help immediately scotching a move which aimed at strengthening the Congress claim to represent the whole of India and at misleading foreign observers. So he wrote back to Gandhi on March 3, 1938:

> I find that there is no change in your attitude and mentality when you say you would be guided by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad as Dr. Ansari is no more. If you pursue this line you will be repeating the same tragedy as you did when you expressed your helplessness because Dr. Ansari, holding pronounced and diehard views, did not agree, and you had to say that you were willing, but what would you do? This happened, as you know, before you went to the Round Table Conference.
>
> At the Round Table Conference the tragedy was repeated by you when you seemed to be willing to accept provisionally certain terms; but you, there also, expressed that you were helpless as the Hindus were unwilling and you, as representative of the Congress, would have no objection if the Hindus and Muslims came to an agreement.
>
> We have reached a stage when no doubt should be left that you recognise the All-India Muslim League as the one authoritative and representative organisation of Muslims of India and, on the other hand, you represent the Congress and other Hindus throughout the country. It is only on that basis that we can proceed further and devise a machinery of approach.

In spite of this clear and forthright attitude of Mr. Jinnah in 1938, Maulana Azad, soon after his election as President of the Congress in 1940, chose to re-open the subject by seeking an appointment with

him to discuss the communal question. And Jinnah gave him the rebuff mentioned above. The elevation of Maulana Azad to the presidential chair made no difference in the situation. The problem was purely communal and could be discussed only between the representatives of the affected communities. Unfortunately, however, the Maulana took Mr. Jinnah's action as a personal attack on himself and nurtured harsh feeling throughout his life.

Maulana Azad's political views—pre-Khilafat and post-Khilafat writings examined

Between 1912 and 1922 Maulana Azad edited and published the *Al-Hilal.* His writings in those days of turmoil and unrest in the Muslim world present him as a revolutionary leader of Islam. His thought was entirely dominated by Quranic teachings. His political concept was inspired by Islam and the ideal state for him was the Islamic State. He wanted to organise the Muslims as a separate entity under the name of *Hizb-ullah;* evidently, the British or the Hindus could have no place in such an organisation. He called it the *sirat-i-mustaqim* (right path) and attained eminence as a great preacher of Islam and the leader of a truly Muslim movement. He displayed not the slightest influence of territorial nationalism.

Characteristic of his views in those days was the reply he gave to a correspondent of the *Al-Hilal,* in its issue of December 29, 1912. In it, he says:

> You have suggested separation of politics from religion. But if we do this what, then, is left with us. We have developed our political thinking entirely from religion. How can we keep it apart from religion? In fact, we believe

that every thought which draws inspiration from any institution (including politics) other than the Quran is *kufr* (infidelity), pure and simple. I regret to say that people like you have never studied Islam in its real greatness. Otherwise, it would not have been necessary either to knock at the door of the government or to follow the Hindu line.

In your second question you have referred to three lines of political thought and have asked us to which direction the *Al-Hilal* wants to lead the nation. Thank God, we wish to have no truck with any of the man-made propositions in your letter. But we invite you to the fourth direction shown by the Quran, that is, the direct path (*sirat-i-mustaqeem*). We firmly believe that those who seek inspiration and guidance in their ideas and actions from sources other than this Book, are not Muslims but are *mushrik* (heathens) because they are guilty of associating other things to the attributes of Quran just as they associate to the attributes of God.

We consider it a great political blunder of the Muslims that they have always kept two ideals before them: either to rely on the Government or to join the Congress and the Hindus. They have considered Hindus and political freedom as synonymous terms and they forgot their own entity because they forgot their God. . . . Therefore all our efforts are directed towards one end—i.e., to remind the Muslims that they possess everything that they desire in the world. Why, then, are they going abegging to other doors?

Then, again, in the issue of *Al-Hilal* of October 9 and 23, 1912, he strongly condemns those who advise the Muslims to join Congress, and remarks:

We are sorrowfully watching those people (Muslims) who are possessed of a burning passion for freedom and for demanding their rights not only from the date of the "Annulment of the partition of Bengal" but from long before. Though they are credited with pursuing a line away from the beaten track, yet we are sorry to say that they also have no other permanent and separate path but the path of political struggle shown by the Hindus. They think the acme of their progress is to follow in Hindu footsteps wherever these might lead. Undoubtedly, we concede the Muslims of today have a lot to learn from the political movements of the Hindus and it is our great misfortune that till today we have not drawn any morals from them. But for the followers of the Prophet there can be no more ignominious death than the fact that Islam has found itself unable and helpless to educate them and lead them in a matter concerning an important aspect of their life and, being disappointed with Islam they had to look lustfully towards the sucked bones of other nations. If that be the case it is better to renounce Islam. The world does not need a religion which is useful only in solemnising a marriage or at the "death bed". According to us, there can be no greater blot on the escutcheon of Islam than that the Muslims must take the lesson of human independence and prosperity from others. . . . Therefore if the Muslims want a fresh lease of life they can get it only as Muslims, not as Hindus or Christians. Nobody who burns incense steals the beggar's old lamps. Suppose, the Hindus change their policy —after all, human views and opinions are susceptible to change and an alteration is always possible—only God's word is unalterable. In such a situation, can we, the Muslims, break up our prayers along with our *imams* (change our

policy along with our leaders). For God's sake, think over this deeply. These are thought-provoking matters. We want to impress upon the Muslims that whatever be their principle or policy, they must find a way which is permanent and their own, which is not changed according to the varying doctrines of the time, which is free from extraneous influences, and about which it may be said 'this is the path of the Muslims'. Our brothers of the country as well as other nations, can, similarly, generate heat and life through political activities and appeals to nationalism. But the Muslims have no separate nationality which may be associated with any particular race, family, territory or geographical division. All that belongs to them is religion, or, to put it more appropriately, they wholly deal with God and God alone. So unless they base all their actions on religion they can neither create the spirit of nationalism among themselves nor can collect and organise their scattered forces. The effect which the words "nationalism" and "patriotism" has on the rest of the world is duplicated for the Muslims in the words, God or Islam. In Europe you can stir the hearts of thousands with one word: "nation"; but if you have any equivalent of this in Islam, it is—God or Islam.

Then, again, in 1921 he advised the Muslims to keep intact their own separate organisation. In this connection, he remarks:

> Indian Muslims are equal partners with Hindus in everything that the Congress Committees are doing. But for keeping the Muslims active, the organisation of the Congress is not enough. Congress Committees cannot produce that effect among the Muslims of any particular city or a town by holding fifty meetings and asking them to spin wheels and boycott British

goods which the Khilafat Committee can achieve by one lecture in a mosque on a Friday.

But as the Khilafat movement began to lose vigour, the interest of the Muslims in their own institutions grew weaker. When the Ottomon caliphate was replaced by a Republican Government in Ankara and the Muslim states disintegrated through the machinations of European imperialism, Maulana Azad's ideas and concepts also underwent a revolutionary change. When he came out of the jail he put a seal on his lips. Even on some of the most important issues—such as the Shuddi movement of Shardhanand, the question of Muslims' demands in the All-Parties Conference, the Nehru Report, or the communal attitude of the Hindu leaders in the Round Table Conference—he was silent, incredibly silent. A dismal tragedy indeed it was for Indian Muslims that they lost the most prominent supporter of their national and religious freedom to territorial nationalism. Muslims were sadly disappointed that the leader who only recently professed and proclaimed the commands of Allah and who was, for that matter, expected to lead them to the final destination, became the disciple of Gandhi—yes, the same Gandhi who strove to raise the structure of a common Hindu-Muslim culture and to establish a predominantly Hindu Government in the subcontinent.

How different, for that matter, does he sound in his presidential address at Ramgarh Congress Session in 1940. He says:

> Our common history of the last eleven centuries has reached into every corner of Indian life with its constructive influence. Our language,

our poetry, literature, society, our tastes, our dresses, our traditions and the innumerable realities of our daily life bear the seal of a common life and a unified society. Our language was different but we began to speak the same dialect. Our traditions were different but now they have been blended into one mould. Our old dresses can be seen in historical pictures. But they do not adorn our bodies any more. All this is the common asset of our national life and we do not now want to abandon it and go back to the time when the life of our social intercourse had not commenced.

If there are amongst us Hindu minds which want to revive Hindu traditions of a thousand years ago they should know that such a dream can never be fulfilled. Similarly if there are Muslims who wish to revive their old culture and civilization which they brought with them one thousand years earlier from Persia and the Middle East, I must tell them that the sooner they are awakened from this dream the better because it is an unnatural thought—such thoughts cannot grow in the soil of realism. Our social intercourse for over one thousand years has blended into a united nationalism. Such moulds are not easily made. They grow out of time aided by the unobtrusive hand of Nature. In our time this frame is complete and Providence has put its seal upon it. Whether we like it or not we are now an Indian nation—an indivisible Indian nation. No imaginative notions of separation can make us two from one. We should submit to the will of Nature and concentrate on the task of constructing our destiny.

In other words, his goal of becoming an *imam* of the Muslims was now buried fathoms deep under the concept of an Indian nationalism in which the

Muslims could at best occupy the status of a minority. The concept of the Muslims being a separate nation was now dead for him and dead for ever.

In 1912, to the Maulana, the Muslims joining the Congress, as we have seen, was an act of disloyalty towards Islam. But by 1940, he had taken such an ideological turn that he would advise them to join the Congress' ranks in ever increasing numbers. Soon after his election to the presidentship of the Congress, he said in a press interview:

> For the protection of their rights Muslims should not look to the British Government but to their brothers of the country, i.e., Hindus. The Muslims should not mistrust them and should join the Congress in large numbers. Their rights are perfectly safe in the hands of the Congress.[1]

Human thoughts are neither final nor inexorable. Views and opinions can be revised and changed. Jinnah, once a staunch nationalist, was forced by the current of history to rectify his earlier judgments and after realising the futility of his attempts to blend Hindus and Muslims into one nation, became the greatest advocate of Muslim unity. So the revision and review of his earlier position by Maulana Azad was by no means an uncommon phenomenon of political life. But the anomaly with Azad is that he insists that his position in 1940 was the same as in 1912! And this is what he claims in his presidential address at Ramgarh:

> I started the *Al-Hilal* in 1913 and placed my decisions before the Mussalmans. I need not remind you that my voice was not without consequence. I will remind my co-religionists that

1 *Statesman*, February 19, 1940.

> I am addressing them from the same place where I addressed them in 1912. . . . I have been telling them throughout this period and would tell them again today that there is only one line of action for the ninety million Indian Mussalmans. It is the same to which I had invited them in 1912.

Moreover, what bewilders his admirers is the fact that the Maulana did not change only his policy and programme, his creed, convictions, and his outlook on the basic realities of Islamic polity; he also disturbed the perspective in which he had presented the events of history in the earlier stages of his career. With this went a radical orientation in his comments and interpretations.

To illustrate this, reference may be made here to his views on the character and nature of the Khilafat Movement, as expressed in the twenties and in his recent book. His addresses, statements and articles during the Khilafat period unmistakably state that the Non-co-operation Movement of 1919-1922 against the British Government was originally a purely Muslim movement, and that the heroes of the Non-co-operation Movement were all Muslims. But in 1958 the position had changed—and changed radically. For his book, *India Wins Freedom,* gives the impression that the real hero of that movement was Mahatma Gandhi while the Ali Brothers and Azad himself were no more than mere camp-followers. A comparison between the two versions shows how the Maulana slants his present version to suit his role and political orientation in the post-Khilafat period.

In the book he writes:

> The question now arose about the next step.

A meeting was held in which Mr. Mohammad Ali, Mr. Shaukat Ali, Hakim Ajmal Khan and Maulvi Abdul Bari of Firingi Mahal, Lucknow, were also present. Gandhi presented his programme of non-co-operation. He said that the days of deputations and memorials were over. We must withdraw all support from the Government and this alone would persuade the Government to come to terms. He suggested that all Government titles should be returned, law courts and educational institutions should be boycotted. Indians should resign from the services and refuse to take any part in the newly constituted legislature.

Others reacted according to their own backgrounds. Hakim Ajaml Khan said that he wanted some time to consider the programme. He would not like to advise others till he was willing to accept the programme himself. Maulvi Abdul Bari said that Gandhiji's suggestions raised fundamental issues and he could not give a reply till he had meditated and sought divine guidance. Mohammad Ali and Shaukat Ali said they would wait till Maulvi Abdul Bari's decision was known. Gandhiji then turned to me. I said without a moment's hesitation that I fully accepted the programme. If people really wanted to help Turkey, there was no alternative to the programme sketched by Gandhiji.[1]

In one of his published addresses, dated October 25, 1921, he mentions this fact in a way which does not only differ from the account given above, but is also contradictory to it.

"The Khilafat Committee," he writes, "took a decision to the effect that non-co-operation was an obligatory duty of every Muslim according to the Law

1 *India Wins Freedom*, pp. 9-10.

of Shariat" [and not as an inspiration from Gandhi]. "What are the Quranic injunctions regarding *mawalat* (co-operation)? This is derived from *wilayat* which means friendship, help and co-operation. Non-co-operation, therefore, means to cut off relations in all matters, and continue this till the other party gives up its highhandedness." Then, again, in the same address, he says: "It was in the session of Khilafat Conference in February, 1920, held at the Town Hall, Calcutta, that the programme of non-co-operation was announced for the first time. I presided over this session. For the first time it was formally announced in the presidential address.

Then he proceeds:

> One should not think this appeal of non-co-operation is being made for the first time. Actually this programme has always existed among the Muslims for the last thirteen hundred years. In Calcutta Session, though all the members of the Khilafat Committee were present, but as you would recollect, the biggest political party of the country, the Indian Congress, did not participate. And it was this last battle which the Khilafat Committee wanted to win, namely, the participation of the Congress in the campaign against the Government on the basis of non-co-operation. Thank God even this stage was reached successfully.

Besides these, there are numerous other statements of Maulana Azad in which he says that the non-co-operation movement was a purely Muslim movement and that the Hindus joined it much later in connection with the demand for *Swaraj*. In any case, these passages from his own writings show how he has given peculiar interpretations even to very

commonly known events of history. He has even surpassed Hindu writers in suppressing facts and in dishing out garbled versions of important events. One wonders whether his book, replete with half-truths as it is, will have any lasting value as a record of history.

This apart, the Maulana, in spite of his high intellectual attainments and vast learning, seems to be in the habit of making contradictory statements even with regard to small incidents pertaining to his family and personal life. The effect of these contradictions on the mind of his reader is one of confusion and doubt even as to the veracity of Maulana Azad's assertions. As a result, even the minor incidents of his life have become a big puzzle. This is all the more so in view of the profusion of self-contradictions and mis-statements the Maulana has indulged in in many of his letters and articles which have recently been published. As an instance, one may conveniently refer to his recent statement about the death of his wife.

Death of Begum Azad

Maulana Azad's wife died in 1944 when he was in jail. In a letter, dated April 14, 1945, published in the *Ghubar-i-Khatir*, he writes that the Superintendent of the Jail came to see him at the instance of the Government and enquired if he had any request to make or wanted anything done. He, however, refused to ask for anything in spite of Jawaharlal's insistence. The suggestion is that even though the Government was prepared to grant him any favour, the Maulana's self-respect did not permit him to ask for anything.

In his recent book, his statement is, however, entirely different. He says:

Early in 1944, I received news from home that she fell again seriously ill. Later came more alarming news. Her physicians were worried about her and on their own initiative wrote to the Government that I should be allowed to see her once as there was little hope for her survival. Government ignored this letter from the physicians. I also wrote to the Viceroy but our correspondence was inconclusive.

One day in April Cheeta Khan came in the middle of the day. This was most unusual. He said nothing and handed me a telegram. It was in cypher but there was an English transcript. It was from Calcutta and said that my wife was dead. I wrote to the Viceroy that the Government of India could easily have arranged for my transfer to Calcutta on a temporary basis so that I could have seen my wife before she died. To this letter I received no reply.[1]

It may be added that the letter in the *Ghubar-i-Khatir* was written only two days after his wife's death. In it, out of sheer vanity, he had related the incident in one way, but twelve years later, perhaps forgetting what he had already said in the *Ghubar-i-Khatir*, he helps himself to another version. Now that both the versions are available, one wonders as to which one of them is true.

This tendency on Maulana's part poses another question. If such be the Maulana's record even with regard to incidents of a highly personal nature, in which his conduct and role are neither a subject of controversy nor that of censure, one could easily imagine how far he could be trusted with regard to public affairs in which both his conduct and role were highly controversial. No wonder, then, in the field of

[1] *India Wins Freedom*, p. 92.

history, the Maulana could not produce the impression of, much less gain the reader's confidence, as a reliable recorder of facts.

Egotism may be a strong device for the exposition of the personality of a musician, a painter or a poet; to a historian, however, it is fatal. For, history is not merely an artistic creation. Style, imagination and embellishments are, if anything, secondary to the main objective of a historian, which is to record for posterity the truth, and nothing but the truth. Objectivity, accuracy and truthfulness are the chief attributes of a historian. One who suffers from an excessive dose of egotism could hardly be expected to bring an historian's approach to his work. This is precisely what has happened with the Maulana. His historical objectivity has been sacrificed at the altar of his excessive egotism.

CHAPTER III

MUSLIM STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE

IN the previous chapter it was briefly explained how in linking the Khilafat Committee's non-co-operation programme with Mahatma Gandhi the Maulana tried to ignore the role of the Ali Brothers and of other Muslim leaders. Maulana Azad thinks that Indian independence is the result solely of the efforts and sacrifices of the Congress and that the British transferred power mainly due to the Congress movement and pressure while the Muslim League always tried to thwart. He contends that all that the Muslim League ever did was to demand the Muslim share every time reforms were enacted, and then sit and watch quietly. He has expressed these views in some detail in the following words:

> The Muslim League was established in 1906 in Dacca after the session of the Muslim Educational Conference during Christmas. It owed its origin to the efforts of Nawab Mushtaq Husain. I was present at the session and remember the two reasons advanced for the establishment of the League. It was said that one would be to strengthen and develop a feeling of loyalty to the British Government among the Musalmans of India. The second was to advance the claims of the Muslims against Hindus and other communi-

ties in respect of service under the Crown, thus safeguarding Muslim interests and rights. The leaders of the League were therefore naturally opposed to the demand for political independence raised by the Congress. They felt that if the Muslims joined in any such demand, the British would not support their claims for special treatment in elective bodies and services. In fact they described the Congress as a disloyal organization of rebels and distrusted even moderate political leaders such as Gokhale or Sir Ferozeshah Mehta. During this phase, the British Government always used the Muslim League as a counter to the demands of the Congress.

The Muslim League entered into the second phase of its activities when it found that the Government was compelled to introduce various reforms as a result of Congress pressure. It was somewhat disturbed when it saw the Congress achieving its object step by step. The League still remained aloof from the political struggle, but as soon as any advance was made it put in a claim on behalf of the Muslim community. This programme of the Muslim League suited Government well. In fact, there are reasons to think that the League was acting according to the wishes of the British. During the Morley-Minto Reforms as well as during the Montford Scheme of Provincial Autonomy, this was the attitude adopted by the League.

Then came the third phase in the League's programme during World War II. Congress had gained immensely in prestige and strength. It was now clear that the British Government would have to recognize Indian freedom. Mr. Jinnah had now become the leader of the Muslim League and felt that he must take advantage of every difference between the Congress and the Government. Whenever there were discussions between the

Congress and the Government for the transfer of power, Mr. Jinnah would begin by remaining silent. If the negotiations failed, he issued a milk-and-water statement condemning both parties and saying that since there was no settlement there was no need for the Muslim League to express any opinion on the British offer. This is what he did during the August offer in 1940 and the Cripps proposals of 1942. The Simla Conference presented him with a situation that he had never faced before.[1]

History has, however, something different to say. The two battles against British invasion and consolidation, one in Bengal and the other in Madras, were fought by Muslims and Muslims alone. The first battle ended in 1757 at Plassey in the defeat of Siraj-ud-Daulah and the second in 1799 with the martyrdom of Tippu at Seringapatam. The Hindus as a community either watched the game from a distance as mere idle spectators or sided with the British. After the British occupation India launched freedom movements only twice, once in 1857 and then from 1919 to 1922, under the non-co-operation programme. The object of both the campaigns was to liberate the country from the thraldom of foreign yoke. From both these movements also the Hindus as a community remained aloof. A substantial section of Hindu population did support the cause of freedom but the initiative, responsibility and leadership on both the occasions rested with the Muslims.

The Congress also launched two movements against the British—the Satyagraha Movement of 1930-31 and the "Quit India" Movement of 1942. The purpose of both these movements was not so much

1 *India Wins Freedom*, pp. 110-11.

the independence of India as a whole, as to force the British to place India under the aegis of the Hindus, leaving the Muslims as slaves, or at best as second class citizens, to be ruled over by the Hindus with the aid of British bayonets. The Congress never thought of throwing out the British or of sharing power with the Muslims on an equal footing.

It is an irony of history, however, that with the vast resources of press and publicity at their disposal the Congress has succeeded in creating a general impression in India and abroad that the subcontinent owes its independence entirely due to the Congress and its efforts. Quite a few nationalist Muslims, whose spokesman and leader the Maulana was, faithfully subscribe to such views. As a result, the Muslims' part in the Indian struggle is usually relegated to a secondary place.

It is, therefore, necessary to go over the history of the period in all its details in order to bring out the struggle carried on by the Muslims for the independence of India. In this endeavour to counteract the false impression about the Muslim role in Indian politics and to establish truth, we shall, however, confine ourselves to certain important events only.

Firstly, it is a gross misrepresentation of history to assert, as the Maulana has done, that the Muslim League was brought into existence in 1906 at Dacca as a counterpoise against the Congress, then engaged in freedom struggle. In order to correctly appraise the nature of relations between the British Government and the Congress at the turn of the century when the Muslim League was born, let us take a bird's eyeview of Indian politics at that time.

Anti-Muslim policy of the East India Company

After the defeat of Siraj-ud-Daulah, it became the corner-stone of British policy in India to shock Muslims out of all notions of rulership and to pamper Hindus in every sphere of national activity. Under this policy, the Muslims were systematically replaced by the Hindus in trade, industry, zamindari and government services. In fact, encouragement of Hindus became an important part of governmental policy. After a century and a quarter of sustained endeavour and as a result of the Permanent Settlement of Bengal introduced by Lord Cornwallis, land tillers and revenue collectors became landowners and the Muslim landlords were completely eliminated. Elsewhere in India, the Hindu *mahajin*, encouraged by official patronage and protected by unrestricted powers and wide scope of money-lending laws, swallowed up the major portion of Muslim estates through mortgage at high rates of compound interest. In trade and industry, the Muslims were reduced to the position of labourers and artisans; trade and commerce were in the hands of the Hindus; moreover, government services were thrown open only to the Hindus under a scheme of preferential treatment even in regions where the Muslims were in majority till the latter's influence declined to zero. The gulf that had divided the British and the Muslims became unfathomable after the War of Independence of 1857. It is indeed a miracle as to how the Muslims, hemmed in by such misfortunes, could yet manage to keep their heads above water.

The man who redeemed Muslims from this apparently hopeless situation was Sir Syed Ahmed

Khan. While on the one hand, he tried to remove the misunderstanding between the English and the Muslims, on the other, he advised the Muslims to eschew politics and concentrate on education. Strained as Anglo-Muslim relations were at that time, the Anglo-Hindu axis had crushed the Muslims almost beyond redemption. And there was no better alternative to Sir Syed's plan.

Indian National Congress and the British Government

The Indian National Congress came into being in 1885. Its founder was Mr. A. O. Hume, a retired British civil servant, who was asked by Lord Dufferin, the then Indian Viceroy, to found an organization which would broadly reflect Indian public opinion.

The motives, which prompted the British officers to found the Indian National Congress, have been lucidly set forth by the authors of *Sixty Years of Congress.* They write:

> One feels very much humiliated that there was not a single Indian at that time who could have taken the responsibility of leading his country out of the slough of despond in which they were at that time. Mr. Hume started the Congress *not for the betterment of India but for strengthening the foundations of British Raj.* He had written in his memorable letter: "Every nation gets precisely as good a Government as it merits." How muchsoever one may be thankful to Mr. Hume for founding an organization, which has by its efforts grown mighty like an oak, we wish every Indian to keep it in mind that the motive behind it was not the liberation of India from foreign yoke but to make the British rule strike firmer and surer roots in India. Where sword had failed

Mr. Hume wanted sweet words and pleasant promises easily made and still more easily broken to capture the imagination of Indians. The Government was past master in the art of breaking to the heart the words of promise they had uttered to the ear. Mr. Hume had a thorough grasp of the oriental mentality of Indians, viz., that they had a child-like faith in British word. Britain had imposed on India a foreign domination and the mechanism of thorough exploitation. The real India never submitted supinely to this alien intruder, the people were discontented, dissatisfied and disgruntled. There is so much to be proud of in the story of our people's untutored and untiring opposition of the foreign conqueror. Our English educated ancestors cannot claim that glory. They surrendered and at once went on their knees for boons and favours. They bartered away their birth right for some posts and offices and instead of trying to extricate themselves from the snares of a foreign rule began to claim and clamour for a share in that exploitation. This is not a bright or inspiring, elevating or encouraging chapter in the history of India. The President of the first Congress said: "We desire to be governed according to the ideas of Governments prevalent in Europe. We are thoroughly loyal. We want proper and legitimate share in the Government." Mr. Hume called for three cheers and if possible thrice that, for the Queen Empress. This is the lowest depth of servility that in a gathering of Indians such a tribute be paid to a foreign ruler whose officers had deprived us of all that is worth having in this world. Hume himself gave his idea of the Congress as a safety-valve for the escape of great and growing forces generated by the atrocities of the British. For many years its first resolution was always the presentation of its respectful loyalty to the throne. Flattery,

sycophancy, moderation, meekness, humility and even humiliation, characterised the proceedings of the Congress. There was neither the desire nor the hope for responsibility at the Centre and if it had been then suggested that India should have complete Independence and sever its connections with the British, delegates would probably have died from shock. Dadabhai Naoroji described it not as a nursery for sedition and rebellion but another stone in the foundation of the stability of British Government. The Congress passed resolutions mainly concerned with the growing association of Indians in the work of administration. It did not entertain the idea of embarking upon agitation, constitutional or otherwise. It was composed of moderate leaders of public opinion who expected to win their way with the Government and acquire high posts by persistent flattery and patient persuasion and it had become almost a universal rule that such Indians were immediately silenced by being selected for high posts or being honoured with titles.

Unswerving loyalty to the British Crown was the sacred *mantra* of the Congress. The educated community admired the British, applauded British principles of Government, wanted India to emulate British virtues. They were the friends, natural and necessary allies in keeping the British domination in full force.[1]

English Presidents of the Congress

The Congress was not only founded by the English but its various annual sessions were presided over by Englishmen. Its Allahabad Session of 1888 had Mr. George Yule as its Chairman; Sir William Wedderbern who retired from the Indian Civil Service in 1887 presided over the Bombay Session of the Congress in 1889 in which Mr. Charles Bradley, the

1 Satyapal and Probodh Chandra, pp. 110-12.

well-known debator and parliamentarian, participated. Later in 1894, another member of Parliament, Mr. Webb, presided over a session of the Congress. Again, only two years before the Muslim League was founded, that is, in 1904, the Bombay Session of the Congress had for its Chairman Sir Henry Cotton, Member of the Indian Civil Service and former Chief Commissioner of Assam.

British Patronage of the Congress

When the Muslim League was created in 1906, friendship between the English and the Congress was so intimate that if an Indian ever presided over a session of the Congress or acquired an important position in the organization he was at once elevated to the Bench or nominated to the Viceroy's Executive Council. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, the official historian of the Congress, has acknowledged this undeniable fact in the following words:

> That the politicians of the earlier half of the Congress Jubilee Term were not the enemies of Government is amply proved not only by their own unequivocal avowals made every now and then but from the marks of favour and preferment for which these sturdy patriots were singled out by Government from time to time. The Judiciary was naturally the field selected for such preferment.[1]

Sir S. Subrahmania Aiyar, V. Krishnaswamy Aiyar, Sir Sankaran Nair, Mr. V. Ramesam—each one of these earlier Congress stalwarts—obtained very important positions in the government merely because of their active association with the Congress. Sir M.

1 Sitaramayya, Vol. I, p. 102.

Krishna Nair made his appearance in the Congress in 1904 and was subsequently made Law Member. In this way Mr. Chandavarkar, Mr. N. M. Samarth, Mr. P. N. Basu and Sir Jamna Lal Setalvad also secured high government positions through the Congress platform. In 1905 Mr. S. R. Das made a forceful speech in the Congress and was soon nominated to the Viceroy's Executive Council. Mr. S. Sinha was made a member of the Bihar Executive Council merely on the strength of his important position in the Congress; Mr. Ferozeshah Mehta, a top Congress leader, was knighted by Lord Curzon in 1905; Mr. Sri Nivas Shastri, a Congressman, was first nominated member of the Legislative Council and then elevated to the Privy Council. There was a further demonstration of British patronage of Congress. In 1908, Sir Arthur Lawley, Governor of Madras, lent his own tents to the Congress for its convention.[1]

Lady Minto, writing in her biography of Lord Minto, describes how Lord Morley in 1908 wished to appoint a Law Member in the Government of India. The choice lay between Ashutosh Mukerji and S. P. Sinha. The latter who had made a speech at the 12th Session of the Congress, held at Calcutta was preferred to a non-Congressman in the final selection. Similarly even in 1920 a Congressman, Mr. B. N. Sarma, was selected by Lord Chelmsford for the membership of the Executive Council in supersession of the claim of a great loyalist, the Maharaja of Burdwan.

In the face of these facts how ridiculous and regrettable is Maulana Azad's contention that at the

1 *Ibid.*, pp. 102 f.

time of the founding of the Muslim League the Muslims regarded the Congress as a disloyal and rebellious organization and had opposed its supposed demand for independence. To tell the truth, during the period we are speaking of, not even one Congressman ever spoke against the British. In fact, till 1920, every Congress session started its proceedings with a resolution of loyalty to the British Crown. This resolution used to be endorsed by all participants standing; and the Union Jack fluttered high above the Congress *pandal*.

In 1914 at Madras, while Mr. A. P. Patro was addressing the Congress Session with regard to the despatch of the Indian Army, the Governor arrived at the Congress *pandal* and the entire house stood up respectfully to receive him. The speaker was stopped abruptly in his speech and Mr. Surendra Nath Banerjee asked to move the resolution on the loyalty of the Congress to the Throne. A similar incident took place at the Congress Session at Lucknow in 1916 when Sir James Meston visited the Congress Session.[1]

The British Government in 1905 agreed, on a demand by the Muslims, to partition Bengal into two Provinces, thereby allowing the Muslims a majority in East Bengal and providing them with an opportunity of freedom from Hindu domination. No sooner was the announcement made than the Congress started protesting vehemently against it. This was the first agitation in the history of the Congress, and it aimed at the undoing of Bengal's partition. Though it was nothing less than a declaration of war against the Muslims, this agitation is yet regarded as the founda-

1 *Ibid.*, p. 101

tion of the freedom movement in the Congress circles. However, as soon as the partition of Bengal was revoked in 1911, fresh demonstrations of Anglo-Hindu amity began. Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya has recorded the details of this agitation and its results thus:

> The first serious agitation in the history of the Congress spread over five long years (1906-1911) and was attended with a measure of repression considered barbarous at the time, leading to a reaction in the outbreak of violence of a sporadic character, and was ultimately crowned with unqualified success in 1911 in the Royal Proclamation annulling the Partition. This led to a gushing praise of the British Government, a renewed faith in its sense of justice and a sense of profound gratitude expressing itself in unmeasured flights of oratory. "Every heart is beating in unison with reverence and devotion to the British Throne, overflowing with revived confidence in and gratitude towards British statesmanship," said Mr. Ambika Charan Mazumdar. "Some of us never faltered," he added, "no—not even in the darkest days of our trials and tribulation—in our hope, in our conviction and in our faith in the ultimate triumph and vindication of British Justice."[1]

Muslim Politics and Muslim League

It is an undeniable fact that until the creation of the Muslim League the Hindus and the British had been sucking Muslim blood. The Hindus regarded the British Government in India as an unmixed blessing and did everything possible to play it up. Muslims, on the other hand, counted the days to their doom. All their efforts, at this time, were solely directed towards self-preservation in the face of the continuous

1 *Ibid.*, p. 101.

repressive policy of the British towards them. In these circumstances, the only far-sighted and sagacious policy of the Muslim leaders could be to make efforts to remove misunderstanding between the Muslims and the British and to introduce the former to modern education. The founding of the Muslim League was an expression of Sir Syed Ahmed's policies. For the first time in 1906, the Muslims were seized of the necessity to foregather on a common platform. Thus began a new era in Muslim political life.

It is true that the Muslim League did not jump into the fray from the first day. But simultaneously with the annulment of the Partition of Bengal in 1911, the politics of the Muslim League received an impetus, and once again the Muslim feelings of contempt and protest against British rule began to revive. At about this time the Muslim mind in India was gravely perturbed at the news of the defeat and wholesale slaughter of Muslims in the battle of Tripoli. The Balkan War which began in 1912, resulted the following year in the fall of Adrianople and a general massacre of Muslims of the place. In India itself, the demolition of a portion of the Cawnpore Mosque and the martyrdom of several Muslims in 1913 forced the Muslims to organize themselves and to prepare for a struggle against the Government.

The League becomes a Revolutionary Body

By 1914 the Muslim League had become a strong organization, spanning in eight years the bridges that the Congress took some 30 years to cross.

In 1915 Mr. Jinnah's star heralding the vision of Hindu-Muslim unity appeared on the horizon of Indian politics. The following year he succeeded in bringing

Hindus and Muslims politically together under a pact between the Congress and the Muslim League, known as the Lucknow Pact.

Since 1913, the Congress and Muslim League had begun holding their annual sessions at the same place and about the same time, and this practice continued till 1922. The proceedings, resolutions and the presidential addresses of the sessions of the two political parties during this period provide an index to their respective orientation towards the British. While the Congress appeared to be playing a subservient role to the British Government the Muslim League was preparing for a war against them. Such trends in the policies of the Congress and the League were, for instance, evident in the presidential addresses of Lord Sinha and Mr. Mazhar-ul-Haq, at the Congress and League sessions in 1913.[1]

The uncompromising and fighting mood of the Muslim League is apparent from the fact that for its annual session of 1917 the delegates of its council elected as its President the late Maulana Muhammad Ali who was at that time considered by the British as an irrepressible rebel and was, therefore, in jail. His election by the League to the office of President was clearly meant to demonstrate its disgust against the Government and its policies. In the absence of the late Maulana, the session was not presided over by any other person as an acting or officiating President, as is generally the custom. To demonstrate how the organization took the internment of the Maulana, the organizers of the session placed a photo of the Maulana

1 See Maulana Muhammad Ali's assessment of the situation in his Cocanada Congress Presidential Address (1923), excerpts from which are reproduced in Mohammad Noman, *Muslim India*.

on the presidential chair. This attitude on the part of the League would be better appreciated if it is remembered that till 1918, Mahatma Gandhi and Mr. Tilak were recruiting soldiers for the British Army.

On the other hand, the Muslim League had taken up such an anti-British attitude that the League Reception Committee Chairman of the Delhi (1918) Session, Dr. Ansari, was accused of spreading violence, hatred and disloyalty against the Government and his presidential address was proscribed and confiscated as a rebellious document. An extract from his address, which we reproduce below, indicates the role of the Indian Muslims at the time. He said:

> There are some people who say that the bonds of love and brotherhood of Islam which exist between the Muslims of India and the Muslims of the rest of the world are opposed to patriotism and nationalism of India. I have heard certain friends say that the Muslims of India could barter away the whole of India for an inch of land in the Island of Galipoli.
>
> Such loose and baseless talk, which is not supported by facts, deforms reality. In every Indian struggle the Muslims have stood shoulder to shoulder with their Hindu brethren. If we express our sympathy with the Muslims of Turkey and Persia, we have also equally proved from our past that we yeild to none in protecting the rights of our countrymen abroad. It was none else than an Indian Muslim, Ahmad Muhammad Kachalia, who continued to fight for a long time in South Africa and till his last moments, occupied the place vacated by Mahatma Gandhi in the struggle for the protection of our rights.

This divergence in the Congress and League attitudes could also be seen in the proceedings of

their sessions in Amritsar in 1919. In spite of the atrocities perpetrated by the Punjab Government in the wake of the Rowlatt Act and in spite of the notorious massacre by General Dyer at Jillianwala Bagh, Mahatma Gandhi insisted on the passage of a resolution, reiterating Indian's friendship and loyalty for the British Government. The Muslim League, on the other hand, was at the time making preparations, under the leadership of Maulana Muhammad Ali, for non-co-operation against the British. Here were laid the foundations of the Tahaffuz-i-Khilafat-i-Usmania, better known as the Khilafat Committee. In the course of the next two years, this organization shook the foundations of the British Empire in India; gave a new life to the Muslims; and, what is more, revolutionized the mental outlook of the Indian people as a whole. In the first instance, it recommended the boycott of the British goods in November 1919; the next April, it passed a formal resolution of non-co-operation which called upon the people to resign from government services, return government titles and boycott government schools, colleges and courts. An elaborate plan of non-co-operation was also passed and circulated to the people.

While the Muslim League and the Khilafat Committee thus carried on, alone and unaided, this crusade for independence against the British, the Indian National Congress sulked as a silent spectator till December 1920. More than eighteen thousand Muslims had left India in the direction of Afghanistan in response to a call by the *ulemas* who declared the country as *Dar-ul-Harb* and also gave the *fatwa* that it was an act of sin to continue living under an anti-

Islamic government. The magnitude of enthusiasm and agitation among the Muslims can be gauged from the fact that in the Nagpur Session of the Congress, out of 14,582 delegates 10,500 were Muslims. Mr. C. R. Das had come with an army of 250 delegates from Bengal and Assam (whose expenses, amounting to Rs. 36,000, were borne by him), fully prepared to oppose the non-co-operation resolution that was to be discussed at the Congress Session.[1] Even before this the Ali Brothers and Mahatma Gandhi had launched a fullfledged attack on the Muslim University and other Islamic institutions while Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya did not permit Gandhiji or any other Hindu leader even to enter the premises of the Benaras Hindu University. Camped outside the Muslim University compound, the Khilafat leaders used all sorts of persuasive, even coercive, methods to wean away the students from the University. The University was picketted by the Khilafat volunteers and the students were forcibly stopped from entering the premises. All this was, of course, done as a mark of protest against the British Government and its attitude to the Khilafat question. In order to provide an alternate educational institution and to fill the gap created by the boycott of the Muslim University, a national institution called Jamia Millia was founded by them. The Muslims collected more than a crore of rupees in three months which the Congress could not do in three years for the Tilak Fund. It were the Muslims who converted the Congress from a debating club into a fighting organization and contributed millions of rupees to its fund.

1 Sitaramayya, Vol. I, p. 347.

The relative strength of the Muslim and Hindu volunteers was measured on November 17, 1921, when the Prince of Wales landed in Bombay. Anti-British demonstrations were held on that date in Bombay and black flags were flown throughout the country to show to the Prince (who was sent by His Majesty's Government to personally assess the political situation in India) the resentment and hatred of the Indians against the British. There were "clashes and conflicts" with the police not only on the very first day of his arrival in Bombay but "riotings and bloodshed" continued for two or three days. As a result of this conflict, fifty-three persons died and about four hundred were injured. The author of *The History of the Congress* has summed up the relative strength, organization and discipline of the Khilafat and Congress volunteers in the following words:

> The arrival of the Prince caused the volunteers' movement all over India to consolidate itself. Till then Congress volunteers were only a kind of social workers helping pilgrims in fairs and festivals, patients in epidemics and victims of local catastrophes, also providing the retinue at conferences and at other national institutions. The Khilafatist volunteers were, however, more "militant," as Government would say, and "they drilled and marched in mass formation," and "they wore uniform."[1]

All of which proves that during these twelve years of political turbulence in India (1911-23), the Muslims represented the revolutionary party. Not even once did the League or any other Muslim political organization opposed either the Congress or the ideal of Indian Independence. In fact, during this

1 *Ibid.*, p. 373.

period, the Muslim League co-operated unreservedly with the Congress and other anti-British organizations, without even raising the question of the protection of Muslim rights or a prior settlement of the communal question. The Muslims took upon themselves the onerous task of organizing the country for fighting the British. They persuaded the Hindus to participate in the anti-Government movement. Such was their fervour for Hindu-Muslim unity that they took out processions of Quran and Geeta in the same palanquin, raised Hindu leaders to the pulpit in the mosques and listened to their speeches from the pulpit; and gave up cow slaughter by their own volition.

Political blunder of Muslim leaders

The Muslim leaders, however, made two serious political blunders because of which their sacrifices and hardships in the cause of freedom failed to find an appropriate place in the country's political history. Firstly, instead of concentrating their national activities and efforts on one platform and under one leadership, they divided themselves into three different political parties, viz., the Muslim League, the Khilafat Committee, and the Congress. The leaders of all these three organizations were practically the same individuals; the same resolutions were generally passed simultaneously from three platforms. The Muslim leaders were the life and soul of the Congress as also of the League and the Khilafat organizations.

Secondly, towards the end of 1921, they made the Khilafat Committee subservient to the Congress. This happened at the time when the Ali Brothers were in jail and Maulana Azad was the President of the Khilafat Committee. At the instance of Mahatma

Gandhi and other Congress leaders, he entrusted all activities of a political nature in regard to non-co-operation movement (which the Khilafat Committee had so far been carrying on) to the Congress. On the other, he made the Khilafat Committee thenceforth responsible only for the collection of money for Samyrna Fund and for other national constructive works. Detrimental to the Khilafat cause as this decision was, it aroused violent protests from the rank and file of the Khilafat Committee. In fact, the Muslim leaders on the occasion wrote articles and issued statements against what they rightly considered an arbitrary and unwise act on the part of Maulana Azad. But by his eloquence and rhetoric he silenced them all.

Be that as it may, this step did irreparable damage to the Indian Muslims and their cause. The whole course of Muslim political struggle henceforth became associated with the name of the Congress. Like commercial concerns, political institutions also have a goodwill and a name which stems from their struggles and sacrifices. Nobody knows personally and individually much of the proprietors of commercial companies. All transactions are carried on in the name of their goodwill. Similarly, the individual acts and achievements of the political personalities do not count so much in the public eye as the platforms and the parties responsible for the results achieved.

Another harmful consequence of the Maulana's action was that the leadership of the Independence movement passed from Muslim hands to those of Mahatma Gandhi. Under the guidance of the Khilafat Committee, the Indian Muslims had done so much for

freedom and had so demonstrably proved their strength and organization that the Hindus as a whole were scared.

Unfortunately the bogie of Pan-Islamism has always loomed large before the Hindu leaders. They were always under the constant fear of being attacked by the joint Muslim forces of Turkey, Afghanistan, Iran and others. This obsession influenced almost every political development in the country on the communal front and it was one of the main factors responsible for the widening of rift between the Hindus and the Muslims. Towards the beginning of 1921 the Hindu press gave a strange colour to the relationship between the Khilafat Movement and the Muslim Turkish Empire. The then King of Afghanistan, Aman-Ullah Khan, incidentally issued certain statements at that time expressing sympathy with the aspirations and ambitions of the Indians for self-rule. The Hindu Press seized upon this statement to warn the Hindu leaders of the Congress against the inherent danger of the consequences of the success of the Khilafat Movement. The British Government took advantage of the situation and made every effort to sow the seeds of misunderstanding and suspicion between the two communities. Even leaders like Mrs. Annie Besant, Dr. Tagore and Lala Lajpat Rai raised a hue and cry against certain statements of the late Maulana Muhammad Ali, which advocated the unity of the Muslim world and the establishment of the laws of Islam. They attributed undesirable political motives to his statements, invented fanciful stories of secret meetings and clandestine deals with the Muslim rulers outside India and advanced the plausi-

ble theory that if the Muslims won the freedom struggle and the British withdrew from the country, India would be overrun by Muslim forces. This was the main reason which had forced Mahatma Gandhi to oppose the resolution of Maulana Hasrat Mohani at the Ahmadabad Congress Session in December 1921, which sought to define 'Swaraj' in the Congress creed as "Complete Independence free from all foreign control". Opposing the resolution Mahatma Gandhi had said:

> Let us first of all gather up our strength; let us first of all sound our own depths. Let us not go into waters whose depths we do not know, and this proposition of Mr. Hasrat Mohani lands you into depths unfathomable. I ask you in all confidence to reject that proposition, if you believe in the proposition that you passed only an hour ago. The proposition now before you rubs off the whole of the effect of the proposition that you passed only a moment ago. Are creeds such simple things like clothes which a man can change at will? For creeds people die, and for creeds people live from age to age. Are you going to change the creed which with all deliberation, and after great debate in Nagpur, you accepted? There was no limitation of one year when you accepted that creed. It is an extensive creed; it takes in all, the weakest and the strongest, and you will deny yourselves the privilege of clothing the weakest amongst yourselves with protection if you accept this limited creed of Maulana Hasrat Mohani, which does not admit the weakest of your brethren.[1]

The "weakest brethren," referred to by Mahatma Gandhi in his speech, were those who were

1 *The Annual Register*, 1922, Appendix, pp. 64-6.

nervous and were frightened by the Afghan phobia in case the British withdrew. No wonder, the resolution was rejected.

About this session, *The History of the Congress* records:

> One notable feature of the Ahmadabad Session was the prominent part played by the Muslim Divines in advising the Congress on the political matters that came up before it. Regarding the conditions of Individual and Mass Civil Disobedience, there was considerable discussion over the question of non-violence,—whether it should be in thought, word and deed. It will be remembered that the Calcutta resolution included 'word and deed' only. The Muslims objected to the addition of the word 'thought' in the volunteers' pledge as opposed to the Shariat and therefore 'intent' was substituted for the word 'thought'. In all these matters, the *ulemah* played a notable part in interpreting political ideas in the light of Al Quoran, the Shariat and the Hadis.[1]

This growing influence of the Muslims was, however, appallingly disdained and dreaded by the Hindus. They wanted to terminate the Khilafat and Non-co-operation agitations at any cost and looked around for some pretext to do so. As soon as the movement was transferred to the Congress and the formal leadership of the movement passed into the hands of Mahatma Gandhi, he seized upon a small, though violent, incident at Chouri Choura in Gorakhpur District (U. P.) to terminate the movement. This was, in fact, a local affair resulting in the death of one police constable and injuries to a few others. Ordinarily, this could have hardly served as a basis for

1 Sitaramayya, Vol. I, p. 336.

putting an end to an all-India agitation, which was in full swing.

The next item on the programme of the Non-co-operation Movement was to launch the campaign of non-payment of taxes and to resort to civil disobedience. The Indian Government was nervous and demoralized. It is difficult to deny that if Mahatma Gandhi had not terminated the movement so suddenly and unexpectedly, the goal of freedom might have been achieved much earlier. It is possible that the transfer of power under the Government of India Act, 1935, might have been given a different substance and form, and the communal bitterness and unpleasantness which marked subsequent Indian politics, might have been avoided.

Political confusion and Hindu-Muslim conflicts

As soon as the movement was stopped the Congress leaders, especially Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya, Sardhanand and Lala Lajpat Rai, started a campaign to convert the poor and illiterate Muslims of Rajputana and other backward areas to Hinduism. This campaign is known as the Shuddi and Sanghatan movement. They were so scared of the unity of the Muslim countries that they preferred to make alliance with the British Government.

After this the Hindu-Muslim unity which formed the main plank in the previous Congress policies was given up for good. After 1924 the establishment of a democratic government on the basis of majority rule became the ultimate goal of the Congress. This meant that the Hindus, on the strength of sheer majority, would get control of the country, and that the minorities would be placed at their mercy. The Muslims

never reconciled themselves to this position and they vehemently opposed this Congress strategem.

Mr. Jinnah, being an incurable optimist till then, did not, however, lose heart and continued to work for the unity of Muslims and Hindus even in those days of confusion and conflict. From the very beginning of his political career he had been opposed to all communal discord in the country. More so after 1916 when he succeeded in bringing about a rapprochement between the Congress and the Muslim League, he worked with untiring zeal for communal unity. He had successfully led an agitation against Lord Wellingdon in 1918 to boycott the farewell public reception that was being proposed on behalf of the people of Bombay in his honour.

Jinnah resigns seat in Legislature

In 1919 he had resigned from the membership of the Imperial Legislative Council to mark his opposition to and protest against the repressive policies of the Government of India after the passage of the Rowlatt Act. In his letter of resignation, dated March 28, 1919, to the Governor-General, he denounced the policy of the Government of India in the following words:

> I feel that under the prevailing conditions, I can be of no use to my people in the Council, nor consistently with one's self-respect is co-operation possible with a Government that shows such utter disregard for the opinion of the representatives of the people at the Council Chamber and the feelings and the sentiments of the people outside.[1]

He stood for separate electorate for the Muslims but considered it to be a temporary phase of Indian

1 B. R. Ambedkar, *Pakistan or Partition of India*, p. 308.

political life. In 1919 he appeared before the Joint Select Committee appointed by the Parliament in connection with the Indian Reforms Bill which was due to be discussed in the British Parliament. The relevant questions and answers are reproduced below:

Q. 3810.—You said you spoke from the point of view of India. You speak really as an Indian Nationalist?—I do.

Q. 3811.—Holding that view, do you contemplate the early disappearance of separate communal representation of the Mohammedan community?—I think so.

Q. 3812.—That is to say, at the earliest possible moment you wish to do away in political life with any distinction between Mohammedans and Hindus? —Yes. Nothing will please me more than when that day comes.

Q. 3813.—You do not think it is true to say that the Mohammedans of India have many special political interests not merely in India but outside India, which they are always particularly anxious to press as a distinct Mohammedan community?—There are two things. In India the Mohammedans have very few things really which you can call matters of special interest for them—I mean secular things.

Q. 3814.—I am only referring to them, of course? —And therefore that is why I really hope and expect that the day is not very far distant when these separate electorates will disappear.[1]

When the Simon Commission, appointed by the Parliament to enquire into the political conditions in

1 *Ibid.*, p. 309.

India and to recommend suitable steps for the constitutional development of the country, visited India in 1927, the whole country held hostile demonstrations against this Commission. The Muslim League, headed by Mr. Jinnah, fully co-operated with the Congress in its opposition to the Simon Commission.

Nehru Report

In spite of all friendly gestures and the active co-operation extended by the Muslim League, the Congress, however, paid little heed to the cause of communal unity and appointed a constitution commission of their own under the chairmanship of Pandit Moti Lal Nehru. This Commission submitted its report in 1928 and it recommended among other things the abolition of separate electorates and reservation of seats for the minorities. This report, popularly known as the Nehru Report, also recommended the acceptance of Dominion Status instead of complete independence, obviously with a view to placate the British Government and to obtain official support for their recommendations. The Congress held out a challenge to the British Government that if the Report was not accepted by December 31, 1929, the Congress would adopt complete independence as its goal and resort to civil disobedience. This was an attempt to blackmail and coerce the British Government to surrender to their demands which could have meant complete annihilation of the Muslims in India.

The Muslims as a whole voiced their protest against the Nehru Report. Almost all Muslim political parties joined hands to condemn the recommendations of the Nehru Report as a crude attempt to enslave the entire Muslim community and to establish Hindu rule

in the country. Except Maulana Azad and Dr. Ansari, the whole Muslim community regarded the new Congress plan as a direct and frontal attack on the solidarity and independence of the minorities. The communal attitude of the Congress leaders can be best assessed by the following words of the Presidential Address of the late Maulana Muhammad Ali at the All-India Khilafat Conference held in Calcutta in 1928. Addressing the Congress leadership he said:

> I ask, when you boast of your nationalism and condemn communalism, show me a country in the world like your India—your nationalist India. . . . You make compromises in your constitution every day with false doctrines, immoral conceptions and wrong ideas but you make no compromise with our communalists—with separate electorates and reserved seats. Twenty-five per cent is our portion of population and yet you will not give us 33 per cent in the Assembly. You are a Jew, a Bania. But to the English you give the status of your dominion.[1]

Round Table Conference

The Muslim leaders maintained that the threat of direct action was actually not directed against the Government of India because if the Nehru Report was accepted the question of complete independence would have never arisen. The sole object of the Congress appeared to be to get power gradually transferred to the majority, so that after strengthening themselves militarily, they could enslave the minorities. An All-Parties Conference was held in Calcutta where Mr. Jinnah strained every nerve to get suitable amendments to the Report accepted by the Congress

1 The *Indian Quarterly Register*, 1928, Vol. II, pp. 402-3.

so that the grievances of the Muslims and the other minorities could be redressed. All these efforts, however, ended in failure. Even then Mr. Jinnah was not disheartened and he made a last bid to discover some formula for the settlement of the Hindu-Muslim question during the Round Table Conference at London. The Muslims demanded 33 per cent representation in the Centre instead of 25 per cent, and this the Congress was not prepared to accept. Mahatma Gandhi used the leaders of Hindu Mahasabha as a cloak and rejected the Muslim demands on the plea that they were not acceptable to the Hindus and that he had no authority to speak on their behalf. Ultimately, the British Prime Minister, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, announced his well-known award, known as the Communal Award. Even after that the Congress showed no signs of statesmanship or large-heartedness. It neither accepted nor rejected the Award and pursued the policy of vacillation and hesitancy.

On his return to India after his five years' stay in England, Mr. Jinnah tried once again to forge a common front between the Muslim League and the Congress. In the first general elections of 1936-37 held under the Government of India Act, 1935, he used his influence to organize a common platform between the League and the Congress in order to combat the reactionary and pro-government forces in the elections. Although there was no formal agreement between the Muslim League and the Congress, yet it was generally understood from the statements and announcements made by the leaders of both the parties that they would work under a common plan and on a common economic programme for the common good of the country.

Can any neutral and impartial historian, with this background of events, honestly claim that the Congress was fighting the battle of freedom alone and the Muslim League was merely watching the game as a distant and disinterested observer? It is true that after the failure of the Khilafat Movement and after the communal role of the Congress was exposed, the Muslim League insisted on the prior settlement, at least in principle, of the Hindu-Muslim question before declaring a united war against the British. This was but natural and was, in fact, the logical consequence of the mistrust and misgivings created by the communal outlook of the Congress leaders. Every party examines the "war aims" of the belligerent powers before deciding to participate in war. That is why their respective "war aims" are always declared by the warring parties so that neutral powers may decide their alliances in the war with one group or the other in the light of these declarations. The Congress was in full agreement with the "war aims" of the British. Yet it did not co-operate with them in the Second World War because their demands were not accepted by the latter. How could the Muslim League be expected to co-operate with the Congress in its Civil Disobedience Movements of 1930 or 1942 when the Congress was not only unwilling to accept their demands but was openly opposed to them? The purpose of the Congress movement was to coerce and cajole the British to bypass the Muslims and place them at their own tender mercies.

The attitude of the Congress leaders in the matter of forming and running the ministries will be discussed in some detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

(1937-39)

LEAGUE-CONGRESS RELATIONS IN U. P.

IN 1937, when the Congress high command decided to accept office in the provinces, efforts were made in the U. P. where the Muslim League had the support of the majority of Muslim legislators, to form a Congress-League coalition government on the basis of a common economic programme. But the Congress, though it formed a coalition government in the Frontier soon afterwards, refused to enter into an agreement with any other political party in the Muslim minority provinces. Maulana Azad claims to have disapproved this policy. He furthermore characterises it as a great contributory factor to the regeneration of the League in the U. P., which, according to him, led ultimately to the establishment of Pakistan.

But the circumstances, which caused the failure of the negotiations between the League and the Congress leaders, were radically different from those which are recorded and are known to the public. According to the Maulana, the whole affair was concerned with three individuals: Jawaharlal, the late Nawab Ismail Khan and Chaudhry Khaliquzzaman. He says that both the League leaders had agreed to sign the pledge to work the Congress programme. But

they wanted two seats in the cabinet for both of them. The demand was, however, not acceptable to Nehru. Although the Maulana tried to persuade Mr. Nehru for its acceptance, Mr. Nehru was adamant. The Maulana has thus laid the entire responsibility for the failure of the talks on Pandit Nehru. Dilating on this episode, the Maulana remarks:

> I found that Purshottamdas Tandon had taken a leading part in the whole affair and influenced Jawaharlal's judgment. I did not have much respect for Tandon's views and I tried to persuade Jawaharlal to modify his stand. I told him that he had made a great mistake in not bringing the League into the Ministry. I also warned him that the result of his action would be to create new life in the Muslim League and thus bring about new difficulties in the way of Indian freedom. Jawaharlal did not agree with me and held that his judgment was right. He argued that with a strength of only twenty-six the Muslim Leaguers could not claim more than one seat in the Cabinet. When I found that Jawaharlal was adamant, I went to Wardha and sought Gandhiji's advice. When I explained the whole situation to him, he agreed with me and said he would advise Jawaharlal to modify his stand. When Jawaharlal put the matter in a different light, Gandhiji submitted to Jawaharlal and did not press the matter as he should have done. The result was that there was no settlement in the U. P. Mr. Jinnah took full advantage of this situation and turned the whole League against the Congress. After the elections many of his supporters had been on the point of leaving Mr. Jinnah, but now he was able to win them back to his fold.[1]

1 *India Wins Freedom*, pp. 161-2.

It would seem from this account that it was not the question of any principle or policy but only a question of seats in the cabinet, that brought about the failure of peace talks. Furthermore, it was only Jawaharlal's adamancy that was responsible in pushing further back the possibility of Congress-League coalition in the U. P. But a cursory glance at the history of the period would show that the Congress high command and its narrow communal outlook and policy were responsible for it. In fact, the Maulana himself, as an important member of the Congress Parliamentary Board, who held the charge of Muslim affairs in the Congress organisation, played no less a significant role than either Nehru or Gandhiji in torpedoing the possibility of a Congress-League coalition. For that matter, he could not possibly absolve himself of his own responsibility in spurning the League's genuine offer for co-operation which, who knows, might have as well paved the way for Hindu-Muslim settlement.

Representation of Minorities in the Cabinet

When the Government of India Act was on the anvil, the Muslim leaders, supported by the representatives of other minorities, put up a united demand that the nominees of the minority communities must be included in the provincial cabinets, and that the statutory provisions to that effect should be made in the Government of India Act. But on the assurance of the Hindu delegates in the Round Table Conference the Muslim representatives had agreed not to insist on their demand if a convention could be established to nominate the real representatives of the minority communities in the cabinet. Consequently, the Government of India Act left the matter to the discretion

of the Governors. Coupland, in his *Report on the Constitutional Problem of India,* says:

> In the course of the discussions from which the Act of 1935 emerged it was generally agreed that the main minority communities, particularly the Moslems, ought to be and in fact would be represented in the Provincial Ministries. The authors of the Simon Report believed it would prove to be inevitable in some Provinces and dictated by expediency in the others. When the question was debated at the Round Table Conference, several minority spokesmen urged that the representation of minorities in the Ministries was so essential that it would not be sufficient to instruct the Governors to do their best to bring it about: it should be a statutory obligation. 'Minorities,' said Mr. Muhammad Ali, 'should feel that the Government is their Government and that they have a part in the administration of the country. Therefore this provision . . . should be part of the constitution itself.' Hindu speakers took the same line as the Simon Report. 'No wise Chief Minister,' said Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, 'will forget an important minority community, because, unless he gets the minorities to support him, he may not find it possible to run the Government.' But to impose minority representation by clause of the Act might endanger the accepted principle of the joint responsibility of Ministers; for it would be difficult, if not impossible, for them to feel responsible unless their association were voluntary and wholehearted. There was a similar discussion in the Minorities sub-committee. It was agreed that 'the representation in the Provincial Executives of important minority communities was a matter of the greatest practical importance for the successful working of the new constitution', but there was the

same dispute as to how it could be achieved. In the upshot the opinion of the Simon Report and the Hindus prevailed. Nothing was said on the subject in the Act, but the Governors were told in their Instructions on the one hand that their Ministers should include 'so far as practicable members of important minority communities and on the other hand that they must 'bear constantly in mind the need for fostering a sense of joint responsibility' among their Ministers.[1]

In spite of the non-co-operation and unfriendly attitude of the Congress Hindu leaders, Mr. Jinnah, on his return to India from his self-imposed exile of five years, started a campaign to forge a united front with the Congress and other progressive elements in the country in order to eliminate the reactionary groups of the country, which were generally arrayed against the forces of freedom and democracy. The Muslim League leadership was much more outspoken and hostile than the Congress in condemning the Government of India Act. In April 1936, the annual session of the All-India Muslim League was convened at Bombay under the chairmanship of Sir Syed Wazir Hasan. Mr. Jinnah, who was the guiding spirit of the session, was responsible for the policy of co-operation and friendship with the Congress which the League adopted at this moot. In his presidential address which reflected the official policy of the League, Syed Wazir was vehement in his condemnation of the Government of India Act. He said:

> A constitution is literally being forced on us by the British Parliament, which nobody likes,

1 Reginald Coupland, *Report on the Constitutional Problem of India*, Part II, pp. 109-10.

> which nobody approves. After several years of Commission, Reports, Conferences and Committees a monstrosity has been invented and is being presented to India in the garb of this Constitution Act. It is anti-democratic. It will strengthen all the reactionary elements in the country, and, instead of helping us to develop on progressive lines, it will enchain and crush the forces making for democracy and freedom.[1]

Commenting on Hindu-Muslim co-operation on major issues during this period, Coupland writes:

> This alliance against the Government on the constitutional issue was more or less consistently maintained on other questions. Shortly before the constitutional debate the Trade Agreement recently concluded between the British and Indian Governments was condemned by 66 votes to 58 but, though no commercial matter of importance had been determined against the will of the Assembly since the establishment of the Fiscal Convention in 1919, the Governments decided that the Agreement being in their view to the mutual interest of both parties, should stand. A few weeks later, the budget, though it allotted one crore of rupees (£750,000) to rural reconstruction and on that account was hailed by one member of the house as 'the first people's budget,' was hotly contested and ultimately passed by certification. Another defeat for the Government was the rejection of the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, which likewise had to be certified. In the spring of 1936 the budget was certified again. Of the fourteen occasions on which the Governor-General used the power of certification between 1921 and 1940, eight occurred in the lifetime of this Assembly.
>
> Thus, in politics at the Centre, Hindus and

1 *Indian Annual Register*, 1936, p. 294.

Moslems successfully combined against the Government, and in general, during this interim period before the new Act came into force, it seemed as if Hindu-Moslem antagonism was at any rate not worsening.[1]

About the election programme of both the parties, he observes:

> Meantime the Moslem League had also issued an electoral manifesto, the work of a Parliamentary Board which the League meeting at Bombay had instructed Mr. Jinnah to establish. To all appearance the social policy it advocated was much the same as the Congress Policy. The League was to play its part in building a new 'social edifice', though it would oppose 'any movement that aims at expropriation of private property'—a plain reference to the socialist ideas of Pandit Nehru and his disciples. Industrial development, the uplift of the rural population, the relief of agricultural indebtedness—all this was common ground. Nor was there much difference on political issues. The League, like the Congress, stood for the abolition of all repressive infringements of civil freedom. As to the constitution the position taken up by Mr. Jinnah in the Assembly was reaffirmed. The federal scheme was damned as heartily .as any Congressmen could wish. The Provincial scheme was also severely criticised, but nothing was said about destroying it: it should be worked 'for what it was worth'. . . .[2]
>
> . . . And there was nothing else in the League's programme to obstruct a practical entente. Might not the co-operation already established at the Centre be extended to the Provincial field? Might not the Congress-League coalition Ministries be established in most of the Provinces? Would not that be the greatest possible

1 Coupland, Part II, p. 10.

2 *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

step towards Indian unity and therefore towards Indian freedom?

Whatever its precise implications, the League manifesto was clearly an offer of co-operation, and, as will be manifest later on, *the subsequent course of Hindu-Moslem relations and of the whole constitutional controversy would have been different if the Congress leaders had accepted the offer.* . . . Before the elections there seemed to be a real chance of agreement. The Congress could never abandon its claim to represent Indian nationalists of all communities, and, as the elections approached, Congress Moslem candidates were put up to contest 58 of the 482 separate Moslem seats. But was it necessary for the Congress leaders to insist that Congress Moslems were the only authentic representatives of their community? Apparently not, since, at any rate, for the purposes of the elections, something like a concordat was established with the League. In the United Provinces the leaders of the two organisations agreed on a common platform.[1]

Jinnah's Efforts for Congress-League Co-operation

Before the general elections, Mr. Jinnah started his countrywide campaign. He toured through the length and breadth of the country. Wherever he went, he contacted Muslims and exhorted them to work in complete accord and unison with Congress. He nominated to the Central Parliamentary Board of the All-India Muslim League all the tried and trusted nationalist Muslims, specially the Members of the *Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind*, completely ignoring the liberal and conservative Muslim leaders, who formed their own independent non-communal party under the chairmanship of the Nawab of Chhatari, namely All-India

1 *Ibid.*, p. 15.

Agriculturist Party. Similarly, the League tickets to contest the elections were given exclusively to such Muslim candidates who had made sacrifices for the cause of the country and who could be acceptable to the progressive leadership of the country. During elections the co-operation and mutual harmony between the League and Congress candidates was clearly visible throughout the country. For all intents and purposes both the parties had a common political and economic programme, and claimed to work for a united, free and democratic India. They also worked jointly for the uplift and well-being of the masses. Jawaharlal was welcomed by Muslim people and Jinnah was applauded and garlanded by the Hindus, especially by the students. In 1936, he was elected president of the non-communal students' organisation, called the All-India Students Federation in an open session held at Lucknow in the famous Ganga Verma Hall, facing the Aminuddaula Park. The session was inaugurated by Jawaharlal Nehru. Though there was no written formal pact between the two parties to form a composite government in the provinces, yet the leaders of both the organisations supported by the Congress Press, announced repeatedly from the public platform and through the press that both the two parties in the legislatures would unitedly face the evil forces of British imperialism. The Congress was more keen to make an alliance with the League as it was facing the formidable opposition of the Agriculturist Party in the provinces, more especially in the U. P.

Soon after the elections Mr. Jinnah announced:

> The constitution and policy of the League do not prevent us from co-operation with others. On the contrary, it is the part and parcel of our basic

> principle that we are free and ready to co-operate with any group or party from the very inception, outside or inside the legislature, if the basic principles are determined by common consent.[1]

Party Dictatorship

In spite of this eloquent offer for sincere co-operation, Mr. Jinnah was, however, not duly reciprocated.

The Congress failure to take the offer is, however, not far to seek. Contrary to expectations it had swept the polls and obtained overwhelming majorities in five of the six Hindu majority provinces. So that it no longer stood in need of League support to form ministries. Mr. Subhas Bose, at that time in Vienna under medical check-up, declared from his bed that "Party dictatorship" should be the slogan of the Congress and that the idea of co-operation and coalition with other parties must be given up for good.

In a letter to Jinnah in January 1937, Nehru declared:

> In the final analysis there are only two forces in India to-day—British imperialism and the Congress representing Indian nationalism. . . the Moslem League represents a group of Moslems, no doubt highly estimable persons, but functioning in the higher regions of the upper-middle classes and having no common contact with the Moslem masses and few within the Moslem lower-middle class.[2]

Mr. Jinnah, still keen to co-operate with the Congress, sought Gandhiji's help and reminded him of his responsibilities towards bringing the two majority communities of the country together. Mahatma Gandhi's only reply (on May 22, 1937) to

1 *India-Pakistan Year Book*, 1948.
2 Quoted in R. Palme Dutt, *India Today and Tomorrow*, p. 234.

his earnest appeal was a dubious conundrum. He replied:

> Kher has given me your message. I wish I could do something but I am utterly helpless. My faith in unity is bright as ever. Only I see no daylight out of the impenetrable darkness and in such distress I cry out to God for light.

Mr. Jinnah was naturally disillusioned once again, but this time, perhaps finally and irrevocably. He was, however, neither discouraged nor dismayed. He immediately repudiated Nehru's statement and rejoined that there was also a third force in the country, and that force was none but the Muslim League. This latter organization, he said, could not be overlooked, much less wholly ignored, as it claimed the singular leadership of ten crores of Muslims of the subcontinent and it would, as such, neither succumb to the sham pretentions of the Congress nor to British Imperialism. He added:

> The Congress have not the monopoly, nor are they the sole custodians of Indian nationalism. As I have always maintained, the Muslim League is prepared to join hands with any progressive party in the fight for the country's freedom, but to achieve this the question of minorities must be settled satisfactorily. Further we are not prepared to merge ourselves into any organization, however great it may be, and however advanced its programme and policy may be unless it is determined by common consent.[1]

This was the first repartee by Mr. Jinnah to the Congress leaders.

This attitude of the Congress leaders soon baffled the faith of Mr. Jinnah who had so far believed in communal unity and reposed confidence in the sinceri-

1 *India-Pakistan Year Book*, 1948.

ty of Gandhi and Nehru. The Congress became more and more communal and wanted to gain political ascendency for the Hindus at the cost of the Muslims. Its designs were by now perceptible in its post-election attitude and in its imperious spirit of party dictatorship. Consequently, the future programme of the Congress was in harmony with its designs, anti-Muslim as they were.

The Congress then decided "to wreck the constitution from within" and consequently refused to accept office. The Governors formed provincial ministries composed of non-Congress elements. In spite of the hostile attitude of the Congress leadership towards the Muslim League, formal invitations were extended by the Governors to the leaders of the five Provincial Muslim League parties, but the League leaders refused to join hands with the non-Congress members in forming the provincial cabinets. Soon after, however, the A.-I. C. C. passed a resolution on March 17, 1937:

> The All-India Congress Committee authorises and permits the acceptance of offices in Provinces where the Congress commands a majority in the legislature, provided the Ministerships shall not be accepted unless the leader of the Congress Party in the legislature in satisfied and is able to state publicly that the Governor will not use his special powers of interference or set aside the advice of Ministers in regard to their constitutional activities.

The special powers of the Governors were provided in the Government of India Act as a result of compromise between the Muslim and Hindu delegates in the Round Table Conference. These powers related only to the protection of the rights of the minorities. So that the Congress resolution was meant to deprive

once again the Muslim minority of its right to appeal to the Governors for getting its grievances redressed in case they were suppressed by the majority.

The Congress observed a *hartal* in the whole country on April 1, to protest against the policy of insisting on the special powers of the Governors, and it "inaugurated an era of three months of senseless agitation, and tearing and raging propaganda all over the country"[1] to gain the objective.

But the issue at hand had a legal aspect. The powers were mandatory and could not be surrendered. Legal experts of India and England, including the great constitutionalist, Sir Tej Bahadur Supru, had pronounced that the demand of the Congress was repugnant to the Constitution and inadmissible. But the Congress was in no mood to pay heed to such legal pronouncements. The author of *The History of the Congress* has recorded the attitude of the Congress high command on the issue thus:

> Yet, be it noted, these powers were statutory in their origin and are marked *special* after grave and solid deliberation. How were the Governors to wash their hands once for all of those very safeguards and reservations which were vested in them by law and which the vested interests of the ruling nation demanded and decreed as the real correctives to the misuse of democracy by a subject country? A battle-royal took place over the legality and the constitutional propriety of demanding such assurances. Legal or illegal, constitutional or unconstitutional was not the issue before the nation. Here was a constitution to which India was no party, which did not carry with it any traces of *self*-determination or *joint* deliberation but was the result of *other* determi-

1 Sitaramayya, Vol. II, p. 45.

> nation or of external imposition. If the Indians should work such a constitution it could be only on their own terms. Else the Law and Constitution would take their own course according to the chapter and section of the new Act. If deadlocks resulted that was not the fault of India.[1]

Ultimately, the British Government had to succumb to the force of the one-sided propaganda of the Congress. The Viceroy, after meeting Gandhiji, gave him some secret assurances and in his broadcast on June 21, formally assured the Congress that the Governors would not interfere in the day-to-day affairs. The Congress high command in turn gave the assurance to the Viceroy that they would consequently abandon their policy of wrecking the constitution from within and would work it in earnest.

Thus a secret pact, which Gandhi himself characterised as "Gentlemen's Agreement," was entered into between the Congress and the British Government and a period of mutual harmony and friendship started between the two warring forces.

Against this background, the League leaders soon realized the utter futility of striking any sympathetic deal with the Congress leaders, who had planned, from the very outset, the complete elimination or an abject surrender of the League. The Congress high command, believing as it did, in one-party government, decided not to accept any offer of coalition from any non-Congress party in the Congress majority provinces. The Congress lists of ministers, therefore, contained the names of one or two Muslim ministers, who owed allegiance to the Congress and some of whom had been seduced from the League.

1 *Ibid.*, p. 46.

U. P. League

The impact of this decision was keenly felt in the U. P. where the League had captured a majority of Muslim seats in the Assembly. It forced the Congress to think and negotiate with the U. P. Muslim League to corm a coalition government in the Province. It was, therefore, natural that special significance was attached to the negotiations for the League-Congress coalition in the U. P. The Central Parliamentary Board was constantly in touch with the affairs of this province at the time of the formation of the ministry. Maulana Azad and Jawaharlal both stayed at Lucknow for quite a long time. Ultimately, in conformity with the general Congress policy on the subject, terms and conditions for taking the League nominees in the U. P. Cabinet were framed and conveyed to the leader of the League Party, Chaudhry Khaliquzzaman, by Maulana Azad himself with a special note of his own appended to the letter containing the proposals, which are given below:

> The Moslem League group in the United Provinces Legislature shall cease to function as a separate group.
>
> The existing members of the Moslem League Party in the United Provinces Assembly shall become part of the Congress Party, and will fully share membership of the Congress Party. They will similarly be empowered to participate in the deliberation of the Party. They will likewise be subject to the control and discipline of the Congress Party in an equal measure with other members, and the decision of the Congress Party as regards work in the legislature and general behaviour of its members shall be binding on

them. All matters shall be decided by a majority vote of the Party; each individual member having one vote.

The policy laid down by the Congress Working Committee for their members in the legislatures along with the instructions issued by the competent Congress bodies pertaining to their work in such legislatures shall be faithfully carried out by all members of the Congress Party including these members.

The Moslem League Parliamentary Board in the United Provinces will be dissolved and no candidates will thereafter be set up by the said Board at any by-election. All members of the Party shall actively support any candidate that may be nominated by the Congress to fill up a vacancy occurring hereafter.

All members of the Congress Party shall abide by the rules of the Congress Party and offer their full and genuine co-operation with a view to promoting the interests and prestige of the Congress.

In the event of the Congress Party deciding on resignation from the Ministry or from the legislature the members of the above-mentioned group will also be bound by that decision.[1]

Maulana's own note appended to the terms said:

It was hoped that, if these terms were agreed to and the Moslem League group of members joined the Congress Party as full members, that group would cease to exist as a separate group. In the formation of the Provincial Cabinet it was considered proper that they should have representatives.[2]

The League leaders in the U. P. were keen for compromise and co-operation with the Congress,

1 *Pioneer*, dated July 30, 1937, reproduced in Coupland, Part II, p. 111.
2 *Ibid.*

partly due to lack of strength and organization among the Muslims themselves, and partly because of their desire to avoid communal conflict as far as possible. They were willing to be subject to Congress discipline in the matter of economic programme, and to resign from the Government in case of the Congress deciding to resign. They were also prepared not to contest any by-election in opposition to the Congress Muslim candidates. That would have amounted to the virtual dissolution of the Parliamentary Board. But the Congress high command would not agree on anything short of unconditional surrender. For this, however, the Leaguers were not prepared. They insisted that the League as an independent entity in the legislature must exist and watch over the interests of the Muslims —at least in such matters, which exclusively affect the Muslim community. No wonder, the proposals of the Congress were rejected.[1]

The Maulana has forwarded a different version which is not supported by facts. He says that the League leaders had signed the Congress pledge, and that in spite of their having done so, Jawahralal did not offer two seats, as demanded by them. If the League Party in the U. P. had accepted the condition of unconditional merger with the Congress and of submitting to the dictates of Wardha unreservedly, Jawaharlal would not have been so unwise as to refuse two seats in the Cabinet for the leaders of the Party—if for nothing else, at least to bury the League lock, stock and barrel.

1 All these details were incorporated by the present writer in his book, *Azadi-ki-Jang*, which was published in October 1937—only two months after the episode—and is by all means the first direct evidence on the subject.

The negotiations, therefore, failed because of the intransigence of the Congress in the matter of policy and principle regarding co-operation with the League. It is surely incorrect to assert that the two leaders of the League had signed any pledge with the Congress. Jawaharlal and Khaliquzzaman have both repudiated it shortly after the publication of the Maulana's book. Actually the stage of signing a document never arrived because the League Party had rejected the main condition of the Congress, namely, to dissolve the League Assembly Party.

Pakistan can never repay the two League leaders, Chaudhry Khaliquzzaman and the late Nawab Mohammad Ismail Khan, who spurned the offer of Congress ministership made to them on an individual plane. They manifested a unique sense of personal sacrifice, and respect for the party and organization in preference to their personal gains. Both of them commanded respect at that time not only in the U. P. but in the whole country. If they had accepted at that crucial time the offer of the Congress and had dissolved the Party as they were in a position to do so easily, the League would have never survived the shock. There could have been no question of its revival or renaissance then. Both were old Khilafatists and very close colleagues of Ali Brothers and had the grit to resist temptations. The result was that the Muslims responded their call in the U. P., and within about six months they won four out of five seats in the by-elections of the U. P. Legislative Assembly. This made the League a live and powerful organization, on which the Quaid-i-Azam later on raised the immortal edifice of Pakistan. The irreconcilable and uncompromising

attitude of the Congress high command towards the offer of friendship to the League, was criticized by almost every contemporary writer on this subject, including the Hindu writers of India. Coupland writes:

> . . . In the first action taken by the Congress leaders under the new constitution, in their first move in the field of parliamentary politics, there was nothing of that spirit of compromise without which parliamentary government cannot be expected to work successfully or long. The logic of 'majority rule' was to be strictly enforced. The Congress would form no coalition with a minority party. If League politicians wanted a share in Government, they must join the Congress and submit to the control of Congress bodies in all of which the Moslem members would be in a minority. If this ultimatum were accepted, it was frankly hoped, and with good reason, that the League would cease to exist. It is not surprising that Mr. Khaliquzzaman, backed by Mr. Jinnah, rejected it.
>
> When the United Provinces Ministry was ultimately formed, it contained two Moslem members out of six. One of them was the Congress Moslem who had won a seat. The other had been elected as a supporter of the League, and, his acceptance of office being criticized, he resigned his seat and was re-elected by a large majority over a League opponent. In the Central Provinces the single Moslem Minister similarly abandoned the League in order to hold office, but in that case there was no new election. In Bombay, no Congress Moslem having won a seat in the Assembly, a Moslem Independent subscribed to the Congress programme and became a Minister. But very few Moslem politicians thus surrendered to the Congress. On the contrary the refusal of its 'high

> command' to share their power with the League was the beginning of a reaction among the bulk of politically-minded Moslems against the idea of a 'Congress *raj*' which was presently to make the League a more powerful force throughout Moslem India than it had ever been before.[1]

The India-Pakistan Year Book, 1948, an independent and impartial historical survey of the political development in Indo-Pakistan subcontinent, compiled by the *Times of India* records the event in these words:

> The situation was rendered more difficult by the attitude of stiffness adopted by the Congress and its President, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. The Quaid-i-Azam refused to convert the League into "an understudy of the Congress" and firmly upheld the position of the Muslim community.
>
> In what may be described as non-Muslim provinces—that is, those in which the Muslims are in a minority—the Congress, however, formed Ministries without the co-operation of the Muslim League. Attempts were made to arrive at an understanding with the Muslim League, but they failed mainly on account of the Congress demand that wherever such an understanding was reached the Muslim League should cease to be a separate parliamentary body and merge itself into the resultant Congress-League Party. When the Muslim League refused to join, the Government minority representation was secured by appointing non-League Muslims as ministers.

The well-known Indian writer, Mr. Palme Dutt, who took domicile in England and contested election in 1945 against Mr. L. S. Amery, has recorded his opinions on this issue in his famous book, *India Today and Tomorrow,* thus:

1 Coupland, Part II, p. 112.

> Following the 1937 elections the Moslem leadership made unofficial approaches to the leadership of the Congress for an agreement in relation to the Provincial ministries to be formed and the allocation of seats. The Congress, however, at this point felt in a strong position to reject the Moslem League approach, repudiate its claim to any political role and establish the claim of the Congress to represent the Indian nation as a whole.[1]

Criticising the Congress policies during this period, he remarks:

> In the period of the Congress provincial ministries the rejection of the Moslem League offer for an agreement represented an under-estimation of its strength on the part of the Congress and provided a lever for the subsequent intense anti-Congress agitation of the League. In the complex situation during the war and immediately preceding it, the degree of confusion, conflicting trends and vacillation of the political leadership of the Congress during this period (election of Bose as President and expulsion of Bose; passivity during the imperialist phase of the war; policy of neither helping nor opposing the war effort; individual *satyagraha;* the ill-starred August Resolution at the moment of the Japanese advance, followed by arrest of the leadership; difficult conditions of illegality, and sporadic disorders, disclaimed at the time by the leadership and subsequently acclaimed as a national struggle and neglect of leadership in the war conditions of economic difficulty and famine) led to a measure of political disorganization and demoralization during the later stages of the war, weakening the appeal of a united national movement during this period.[2]

1 Palme Dutt, p. 234.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 383.

The well-known Indian professor of history and a great scholar and author, Dr. Beni Prasad, in his *The Hindu-Muslim Questions* has also discussed the situation in a manner, which clearly contradicts the thesis of Maulana Azad. He writes:

> In the elections of 1937 the Congress won a large majority in six provinces and formed purely Congress Governments in all of them and within a few months in a seventh province, the N.-W.F.P. It declined coalition with the Muslim League mainly for two reasons, viz., parliamentary orthodoxy and an expectation of winning the Muslim masses to its banner on the basis of a common programme.[1]

Again, criticizing the 'Majority Rule' policy of the Congress, he writes:

> Orthodox parliamentarism led the Congress leaders to forget that the one-party theory, even if true of political agitation, was not, in the absence of an accomplished revolution, applicable to ministerial office. The change from extra-constitutional action to governmental responsibility to which the Congress assented in 1937, was a change of scale and methods of the profoundest significance and called for a fresh evaluation and a re-arrangement of political forces. The country was passing through a crisis and crises have usually been surmounted even in England through coalitions, for instance in 1915, 1931 and 1940.[2]

Denouncing orthodox parliamentarism, he writes further:

> The majority 'principle' is at bottom not an ethical maxim but a rule of expediency, and has always to be so interpreted as to command minority affirmation. Orthodox parilamentarism, how-

1 Beni Prasad, *The Hindu-Muslim Questions*, pp. 59-60.
2 *Ibid.*, pp. 60-61.

> ever, carried the day and excluded the Muslim League as an organization from a share in power. League as an organization from a share in power. . .[1]
>
> . . . Lest the basis of the Congress government should be unduly narrow, it was proposed to launch a mass contact programme and win over the Muslim masses on the basis of political independence and economic improvement. The Muslim League as a party was faced with the prospect of long exclusion from power not only in several provinces but also in the coming Federation. The rigid discipline enforced by the High Command forbade all hopes of the Congress splitting into parties and a coalition being formed. What was equally momentous, the Congress proposed to cut the ground beneath the League by winning over the Muslim masses to itself. True, the Congress promised economic prosperity but man does not live by bread alone.[2]

The extracts given above, all from non-Muslim authors (who by no means could be accused of being either pro-Muslim or pro-League), show how contemporary writers viewed the Congress policy *vis-a-vis* ministry-making. Also, they give the lie to Azad's contention, and conclusively prove that the breakdown of the League-Congress parleys was not merely the result of the arbitrary and personal whims of Jawaharlal Nehru, but was dictated by the general policy of the Congress high command not to recognize the League as a separate entity. And Azad's role was by no means insignificant, as he himself was not only an active member of the Congress high command and a party to the decisions of the Congress leadership,

1 *Ibid.*, pp. 61-2. 2 *Ibid.*, p. 77.

but was also (in his capacity as one of the three members of the Central Parliamentary Board of the Congress) a part and parcel of the implementing authority.

Azad seduces Ibrahim

Yet another deplorable aspect of the episode must needs be mentioned here. In trying to seduce Muslim members from the League Party, the Maulana made not only the compromise between the League and the Congress more difficult; he also widened the rift already existing between the two parties.

The Congress was having some difficulty in regard to the inclusion of Muslim names in the U. P. Only one Muslim—Rafi Ahmad Qadwai—had returned on its ticket in the U. P., and he too had won the seat in a by-election through the support of Khaliquzzaman. The Congress was to have two Muslim Ministers in the Cabinet. Attempts were, therefore, made to seduce some members of the League. Khaliquzzaman had already rejected the offer. So that if the League had not been betrayed, the Congress would have been forced to some extent to come to an agreement with it and thus a Congress-League Government might have been a possibility, though not a certainty.

At this stage Maulana Azad's role again comes into prominence. He succeeded in converting Hafiz Ibrahim. The latter agreed to resign from the League on the condition that he would be made a Minister. Maulana Hifz-ur-Rahman, the brother-in-law of Hafiz Ibrahim, and Maulana Bashir Ahmad, one of his close friends and a member of the Working Committee of the *Jamiat-ul-Ulema,* struck this bargain with the Congress through Maulana Azad's efforts. Thus the chances of co-operation between the Congress and the

League in forming a government, howsoever remote, were lost for ever. It should be noted that Hafiz Ibrahim submitted his resignation from the League when it was engaged in negotiations with the Congress. The Congress had now found a figurehead and was no more compelled to ask the League to join it in forming the Government. Ibrahim's resignation created a situation which made the gulf between the two major political parties almost unbridgeable. The betrayal of a member to the party on whose ticket he was elected in order to get a seat in the Cabinet was rather new and unusual, though, later on, it became a common phenomenon in the subcontinent. The League naturally regarded it as an encroachment on her right to exist. The two parties were thus soon converted into two hostile and warring camps. This act of disloyalty on the part of Hafiz Ibrahim and this violation of political morality on the part of the Congress were both condemned throughout the country. Ibrahim tried to justify his action by resigning his membership and seeking re-election from the same constituency. But he did not resign from Ministership and fought the election with all the advantages of holding a portfolio in the Ministry. Under these circumstances his success in the by-election was a foregone conclusion.

Hafiz Ibrahim's agreement with Maulana Azad was a secret agreement. Few persons know that Ibrahim's betrayal to his party was on the advice of Azad. It may be mentioned here that the news of this secret agreement by sheer chance reached Maulana Ahmad Said through Maulana Bashir Ahmad, at a time when I happened to be present with them. These persons were till then in the League and I had very

good relations with them. This was soon confirmed by the news that Hafiz Ibrahim had dissociated himself from the League, and was taken into the U. P. Cabinet. Later, in August 1937, I wrote a letter to Maulana Ahmad Said, in which I reminded him of that unhappy incident. His reply dated September 2, 1937, left no ground to doubt the part played by Maulana Azad in bringing about the breakdown of the Congress-League negotiations in the U. P. He said:

> I was surprised to read the first part of your letter; who told you all these things and how could you remember them? I was not forced by Maulana Bashir Ahmad Kathori to issue a statement. Hafiz Ibrahim had settled his deal with Maulana Abul Kalam Azad; I was informed about it by Maulana Bashir Ahmad. I had never called Hafiz Ibrahim a traitor; on the contrary, I had said that no one had a right to accuse Ibrahim as no objection has been raised against the conduct of Raja Sahib of Salimpur.[1]

The object of the calculated move of the Congress to keep the Muslim League out of office was obviously to create frustration and demoralization among the Muslims, and to send them into political wilderness.

Simultaneously a Muslim mass contact programme was launched by the Congress on a large scale to wean them away to their fold.

Taking cognizance of the situation, the League started a counter-movement to defy the Congress and to bring Muslims closer by singleness of purpose. So far

1 The reference in the letter is to Salimpur's joining the Cabinet of Nawab of Chhatari, which had been installed on the refusal of the Congress to form a government; it remained in office for a short period only. As the Raja of Salimpur had taken this step without the express permission of the League, he was forced to dissociate himself from that body in spite of all his previous services. He was not allowed to re-enter the organization and ultimately had to withdraw from politics itself.

the Muslims were divided into a host of petty organizations, or lured by the pretensions of the Congress. It was only now that the Muslims awakened to the danger posed by the Congress attitude and became united. The task, tremendous as it was, now rested on the shoulders of Mr. Jinnah who, soon after the Lucknow Session, went on a countrywide tour. In Patna on October 27, 1937, Mr. Jinnah condemned Jawaharlal's vitriolic remarks about the Lucknow Session of the League that it was the last ditch of political reaction, and said:

> But we hear of mass contact. For what? To get hold of men who will be their creatures, who will sign their programme and sing *"Bande Matram"*. Just see the monstrosity of this! The majority of the Muslims have no confidence in those Muslims who are willing to sign the pledge to work out the policy of the Congress. Yet these are just the persons who are accepted as ministers —Muslim Ministers at that. This is adding insult to the injury. It is following the policy of the ostrich. They think that we are all fools. They say, here is a Muslim minister. That man struts about in the province as a Muslim minister. He manages somehow or other. He betrays the party whose pledge he signed. He says he has changed his views; he says he does not agree with the party any more, not because we have done anything wrong, for we have not done anything at all. Yet such a man is made to pass as a Muslim minister![1]

Along with this attempt to "kill" the Muslim League, a vigorous campaign to de-Muslimise Muslims was started. Muslim children in schools and colleges were forced to sing every morning the polytheistic

1 Quoted in Noman, p. 358.

song of "*Bande Matram*" and to join the Hindu boys in their worship before Mahatma Gandhi's picture, which was compulsorily to be hung on the walls in every office and institution. The tricolour Congress flag was ordered to be flown on every Government building. The education system was completely changed under what is commonly known as the Wardha scheme. This process of de-Islamizing education had been carried to such an extent that even in the Frontier Province, the text books prepared by the *Anjuman Himayat-ul-Islam* were removed from the syllabi and the Wardha scheme was enforced in its schools.

Persecution of Muslims was also launched upon on a wide scale. In August 1938, in the small town of Tandah (in Fyzabad district), the home of Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani, seventy Muslims were wounded as a result of firing and about two hundred of them were bound in chains and forced to parade in the streets; even inside the buildings of the mosques they were tied with ropes. These details were confirmed at the time by Maulana Husain Ahmad Madani and Hafizur Rahman themselves who personally visited the place of occurrence. In Chandpur Biswah, in the C. P., the entire male adult population of the Muslims, numbering more than four hundred, was arrested and dragged to the court with their legs tied with ropes in retaliation for the unproved murder of an obscure Hindu. Against the background of these undeniable facts how amusing is the claim of the Maulana that the propaganda of Muslim League against Congress ministries was unfounded and baseless. He says:

> From personal knowledge, and with a full sense of responsibility, I can say that the charges levelled by Mr. Jinnah and Muslim League with

regard to the injustice to Muslims and other. minorities were absolutely false. If there had been an iota of truth in any of these charges I would have seen to it that the injustice was rectified. I was even prepared to resign, if necessary, on an issue like this.[1]

But the facts recorded by some of the historians of our time belie what the Maulana has said. For instance, Coupland says:

> That Congress Governments, unlike those of the Western democracies, regard themselves as 'national' in a full, exclusive and permanent sense was illustrated by two small matters which otherwise would have had little significance. The first was the hoisting of the Congress tricolour flag on buildings under the management of local authorities when the Congress Governments came in. No doubt that novelty was mainly introduced as a challenge to the old *regime*, a repudiation of the Union Jack. But it was also a challenge to all minority parties; and the Moslem League replied by hoisting the Star and Crescent above it. On one occasion four flags were flying on the same building in the United Provinces; on another occasion in the Central Provinces there were five. The second matter was the opening of proceedings in the legislature by singing *Bande Matram*, a patriotic song which the Congress had adopted as its and therefore *the* national anthem. Again, no doubt, though no one had suggested the singing of 'God Save the King', the impulse was revolutionary. The song had been banned from time to time under the old *regime*. To sing it was a symbol of emancipation. But again it challenged the minorities, and this time more provocatively, since some of the verses of *Bande Matram*[2] can

1 *India Wins Freedom*, p. 22.
2 The English translation and the explanation of its use is given in Coupland, Part II, pp. 322-3.

be taken to exalt Hinduism at the expense of Islam. Moslem members accordingly walked out. The song was then cut down by order of the Working Committee to its first two verses which contained nothing that could offend Moslem sentiment. But the Moslem members still walked out. Finally the song was dropped, and so also was the flying of the tricolour on public buildings. Both demonstrations had been too hastily conceived.[1]

Professor Beni Prasad disapproves the anti-Muslim policies of the Congress, and says:

> It was the fear of the future that weighed heavily on the Muslim mind in 1937. Its misgivings were roused afresh by the incorporation of certain party symbols into the practice of Congress legislatures and executives. The Congress majorities insisted not merely on hoisting the Congress flag on certain buildings but also on the singing of the intensely Sanskritised *Bande Matram* song to inaugurate the legislative sessions. Soon afterwards the Congress Government of the Central Provinces persisted in a designation, Vidyamandir, not only Sanskritic but meaning 'temple of learning'—the term 'temple' being particularly obnoxious to opponents of idolatry—for a certain type of school in the teeth of keen opposition from the Musalmans and yielded at last only a campaign of passive resistance. The Muslims resented the increasing abandonment of Urdu by the Hindus and were set athinking by the warm advocacy of the cause of Hindi, as distinct from Urdu, by some prominent leaders in the U. P., the C. P. and Bihar. Many a Muslim looked askance at a Congressman's highly Sanskritised speech before a composite audience. The Muslim League felt that the majority paid little heed to the accommodation of minorities. Its own

1 *Ibid.*, p. 102.

> growing coolness of patriotism and its increasing inability to transcend the limitations of the communal standpoint disposed it to interpret any ambiguous move as an attempt to suppress Muslim culture and establish Hindu *raj*. Disregard of one's susceptibilities and denial of a due share of influence and power weaken the sense of identification or a commonwealth and result either in uneasy acquiescence or a struggle to get round the majority, in the last resort through secession or disruption. Whatever rouses a humiliating sense of existence on sufferance paves the way either for perpetual disharmony or for active revolt.[1]

League Organised

And the Muslims revolted against the haughty and repressive policies of the Congress. Instead of demoralising them, the Congress attitude intensified their desire and determination to come into their own. No wonder, they promptly responded to Jinnah's clarion call for unity and organization, and rallied round him as never before.

The Muslim trend to defy the Congress and strengthen the League first became evident at the League Lucknow Session in October 1937. Historic as this session was, it engendered great hope and self-confidence among the Muslims, who accepted the challenge of the Congress and started preparing themselves for the great struggle that lay ahead.

After the Lucknow Session the Muslim League defeated the Congress in four out of five by-elections in the U. P. In April 1938 Mr. Jinnah was given a rousing reception at every station by thousands of Muslims on his way to Calcutta where he was to preside over a

1 Beni Prasad, pp. 77-8.

special Shahidganj session. Moreover, in the open session of the League at Calcutta there was a record audience of more than two lakhs. By then Mr. Jinnah had also come to be hailed as the Quaid-i-Azam (great leader). This unexpected enthusiasm of the Muslims opened the eyes of Gandhi who could then see the light out of the "impenetrable darkness". At Calcutta, Mr. Jinnah received a telegram from Mahatma Gandhi requesting him to stop over at Wardha to meet him. Mr. Jinnah could not comply with his request because he had already arranged his programme otherwise.

Soon after, however, Mahatma Gandhi met Mr. Jinnah. Subsequently Jawaharlal Nehru and the Congress President, Subhas Chandra Bose, also met Mr. Jinnah. The Congress by then had realised its follies and was prepared to enter into coalition with the Provincial League parties. But it was too late. Muslims had realised that it was futile and sheer waste of time to hobnob with the Congress. They expected no justice and fairplay at its hands. The Quaid-i-Azad demanded that before coming to any agreement the Congress must acknowledge the Muslim League as the only authoritative and representative organization of the Muslims. The Congress, however, refused to accept the League's demand and the negotiations failed once again.

Meantime, the League movement continued gathering speed and momentum and within a year or so, it became a formidable political rival of the Congress. In December 1938 the League annual session at Patna was marked by an unprecedented enthusiasm on the part of the Muslim masses. It was convened to register their protest and resentment against the anti-

Prasad, were so much annoyed by this resolution that they sent in their resignations to Maulana Azad. For, to them, the creed of non-violence was more important than the question of freedom of India. They would adhere to the policy of complete aloofness from all sorts of war activities, whether India was given freedom or not.

The Maulana has recorded these facts in detail in his book.[1] Commenting upon the resignations of Sardar Patel, Rajendra Prasad and others on the issue of non-violence, the Maulana writes:

> Now when I am writing in 1957 and looking at events in retrospect, I cannot refrain from saying that there was an astonishing transformation in the attitude of some of his closest followers on the question of violence versus non-violence. Sardar Patel, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Acharya Kripalani and Dr. Profulla Ghosh had wanted to resign from the Working Committee when the Congress passed a resolution that it would support the war effort if the British declared India free. They then wrote to me that for them non-violence was a creed and even more important than Indian independence. When, however, India did become free in 1947 not one of them said that the Indian army should be disbanded. On the contrary, they insisted that the Indian army should be partitioned and brought under the immediate control of the Government of India. This was contrary to the proposal made by the Commander-in-Chief of the time. The Commander-in-Chief had suggested that for three years there should be a joint army and a joint command but they would not agree. If non-violence was really their creed, how was it possible for them to take responsibility in a Government which spent over a hundred crores

1 *India Wins Freedom*, pp. 33-6.

> a year on the army? In fact, some of them wanted to increase and not diminish the expenditure on armed forces and today the expenditure is some two hundred crores.[1]

Referring to an incident relating to Subhas Chandra Bose in early 1942, the Maulana speaks of Gandhi's inconsistencies in the following words:

> Here I would like to mention a report which was circulated about the time of Cripps's arrival. There was a news flash that Subhas Bose had died in an air crash. This created a sensation in India and Gandhiji, among others, was deeply moved. He sent a message of condolence to Subhas Bose's mother in which he spoke in glowing terms about her son and his services to India. Later on it turned out that the report was false. Cripps, however, complained to me that he had not expected a man like Gandhiji to speak in such glowing terms about Subhas Bose. Gandhiji was a confirmed believer in non-violence, while Subhas Bose had openly sided with the Axis powers and was carrying on vigorous propaganda for the defeat of the Allies on the battlefield.[2]

In 1942 the war policy of the Congress reached its climax when the "Quit India" Resolution was passed and a country-wide aggressive and violent movement was launched. The Maulana has again expressed his surprise over the change of not only the policy but also the basic principles and creeds of the Mahatma after his release from jail in 1944. The Mahatma was now all for war effort and he was prepared to help the Government in its war activities on the condition that India was made free. Says the Maulana:

> His second move was an attempt to open fresh negotiation with the Government. Contrary

1 *Ibid.*, p. 94-5.   2 *Ibid.*, p. 41.

> to his previous declarations, he now issued a statement to the *News Chronicle* of London that if India were declared free, she would voluntarily side with the British and give full support to the war effort. I was completely taken aback when I read his statements and knew that both these actions were doomed to failure.[1]

The Maulana's argument gives the impression that Mahatma Gandhi's inconsistencies were either the result of an unrealistic mind of an idealist or were based on miscalculations. An objective analysis of the shift in Congress attitude towards the war effort, however, reveals how it was dictated by nothing but purely communal considerations. The Congress wanted to gain ascendancy and power for the Hindus and to coerce the British into bypassing the Muslims and the Muslim League. It is in pursuance of this objective, so near to the Congress heart, that it adopted the various tactics she did to force the British to surrender power to the Congress in lieu of the support it promised towards war efforts in the event of India being declared free. The Congress was, as it were, too obsessed with fear of Muslim domination and the phobia of pan-Islamism to strike a deal with the Muslims and to present a united front. Instead, it was anxious to come to a settlement with the British without reference to the Hindu-Muslim question. Maulana Azad himself points out several instances wherein the Congress has most unabashedly displayed a narrow and parochial outlook in handling the affairs of the country.

For instance, consider the following instances:

(1) Mr. Nariman's services to the cause of freedom were ignored because he was a Parsi. Mr. Kher

1 *Ibid.*, p. 93.

was given preference over him and was appointed Chief Minister of Bombay for no other reason than that the latter was a Hindu. Jawaharlal, Gandhi and Patel, all acted in this matter in unison to deprive Mr. Nariman of the post of Chief Ministership on grounds of communalism and nothing else.[1]

(2) Mr. C. R. Das wanted to undo the injustice done to the Muslims of Bengal in the matter of representation in the services. He had, therefore, declared that recruitment from other communities would remain suspended till the number of Muslims became proportionate to the percentage of their population in the province. This order shook the very foundation of the Congress in Bengal. C. R. Das was attacked from all sides. "He was accused of opportunism and even partisanship for the Muslims. . ." After his death, his declaration was repudiated.[2]

(3) In 1944, Bhulabhai Desai had entered into negotiations with Liaquat Ali Khan, the Deputy Leader of the League in the Central Legislature. This had been done with the express and written permission of Gandhi. But other Congress leaders were so annoyed with him for negotiating with the League that they did not give him the Congress ticket in the 1945-46 General Elections. Even Gandhi, who had given him permission to negotiate, and Jawaharlal opposed him. Bhulabhai was so shocked by this attitude of the Congress leaders that his health was seriously affected and he died shortly afterwards.[3]

(4) Before the Partition scheme was accepted, Maulana Azad suggested to the Congress that Jinnah should be made Prime Minister of undivided India.

1 *Ibid.*, p. 15. 2 *Ibid.*, pp. 21-21.
3 *Ibid.*, pp. 135-7.

Muslim policy of the Congress ministries. It now became increasingly evident that the Congress had completely and thoroughly lost the battle.

Writing about the impact of the totalitarian policy of the Congress on the Muslim masses, Coupland says:

> What was the effect of the widening communal gulf on the constitutional problem?
>
> Before 1937 Mr. Jinnah, it will be remembered, had differed from the more militant Congress leaders in wanting to work the new Provincial constitution 'for what it was worth'. By 1938 the position had been reversed. Congress Ministers were finding that there was some worth in the constitution. It was the League that now denounced it because it had made possible, it declared, the systematic persecution of the Moslems in the Congress Provinces; and it was the League now that threatened to combat it by the unconstitutional methods so often employed by the Congress but never by the League since the Caliphate agitation of 1920-21. 'The time has come,' ran a resolution of the Patna Session in the winter of 1938, 'to authorize the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League to decide and resort to direct action if and when necessary.'
>
> Those were ominous words, for they meant at the least that the League was prepared to adopt the Congress technique of 'civil disobedience'. And the danger of that was unmistakable. Mr. Gandhi himself had often admitted the difficulty of preventing the rule of 'non-violence' from being broken in the course of a Congress 'mass-disobedience' campaign. What, then, was likely to happen with mobs of League 'volunteers' who had never subscribed to that rule or shared in the Hindu sentiment that had inspired it? Unfortunately, moreover, the means of 'direct action' were ready to hand. The establishment of quasi-

military organization by the Congress had naturally provoked a counter-movement by the League. Two bodies were in existence by the end of 1938. The first was the 'Muslim League Volunteer Corps'. It was said to number 11,000 in the United Provinces and 4,000 in the North-West Frontier Province. The second body was the 'Muslim National Guard', equipped with uniform and flag, and said to be 3,000 strong in the United Provinces. Smaller 'guards' had been organized in Sind and Bengal.[1]

In September 1939 the Working Committee declared that Moslem India was:

> . . . irrevocably opposed to any 'federal objective' which must necessarily result in a majority-community rule under the guise of democracy and a parliamentary system of government. Such a constitution is totally unsuited to the genius of the peoples of this country which is composed of various nationalities and does not constitute a national State.[2]

Discussing the circumstances that led to the speedy rise of the League, Mr. Palme Dutt says:

> From this stage[3] conflict between the Congress and the Moslem League became increasingly sharp. The Moslem League under the skilful leadership of Jinnah set itself to strengthen its organization, extend its basis of support among the Moslem masses and consolidate the various dissident Moslem groups and organizations so as to make the Moslem League the main organization of the Moslems in India. Nor was this policy without success. During the period 1937-45 a decisive change took place in the position and relative strength of the Moslem League as it won

1 Coupland. Part II, p. 195.
2 Quoted in *Indian Annual Register*, 1939, Vol. II, p. 351.
3 After the refusal of the Congress to co-operate with League in 1937.

increasing mass support among the Moslems. The membership of the Moslem League which had only totalled 1,330 in 1927 increased in 1938, according to its claim, to hundreds of thousands, and by 1944 to an officially claimed figure of some 2 millions. The 1946 elections reveal the changed position. In the Central and Provincial Legislative Assembly elections the Moslem League won 460 out of the 533 Moslem seats. There can be no doubt that during this period the Moslem League had established its position as the major political organization among the Moslems in India.[1]

The Congress ministries resigned by October 31, 1939. The magnitude of Muslim anger and resentment, especially in the minority provinces, against the Congress ministries can be assessed by the enthusaism and determination with which they observed December 22, 1939, throughout India, at the call of their great leader, as the day of deliverance. The Muslims heaved a sigh of relief, and thanked the Almighty that at long last the Congress governments had ceased to function.

1 Palme Dutt, p. 234.

CHAPTER V

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS DURING WAR (1939-41): PAKISTAN MOVEMENT LAUNCHED

THE attitude of Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress towards the British Government with regard to its war efforts was a puzzle for Maulana Azad which, he says, he could never solve. Soon after the War began, Gandhi declared that he could not co-operate with the Government because he was an advocate of non-violence and therefore he was totally opposed to all kinds of war. He made an appeal to the British people to give up the use of all weapons of war and oppose Hitler with spiritual force only. He also met Linlithgow and asked him to accept this advice. The Viceroy was obviously taken aback at this suggestion, and, as Azad has pointed out, forgot even to ask his A.-D.-C. to accompany Gandhi to his car as was customary. Later in 1940, the Congress Working Committee passed a resolution which said that in the struggle between Nazism and Democracy its sympathies were with the latter, but that India could not participate in the war actively until she became independent. The followers of Gandhi, particularly Sardar Patel and Rajendra

the basis of majority rule Gandhiji's views on war situation were widely known. He was all for the allies. On July 23, 1939, he wrote a letter from Abbottabad to Hitler appealing him not to disturb the peace of the world.

No sooner was the war declared, the Viceroy telegraphically invited Mahatma Gandhi to see him at Simla, where their meeting took place on September 4, 1939. Mahatma Gandhi gives his own account of the sentiments which he expressed in that meeting. He says:

> Having, therefore, made my position *vis-a-vis* the Congress quite clear, I told His Excellency that my own sympathies were with England and France from the purely humanitarian stand-point. I told him that I could not contemplate without being stirred to the very depth the destruction of London which had hitherto been regarded as impregnable. And as I was picturing before me the Houses of Parliament and the Westminster Abbey and their possible destruction, I broke down. I have become disconsolate. . . .
>
> . . . I am not, therefore, just now thinking of India's deliverance. It will come, but what will it be worth if England and France fall, or if they come out victorious over Germany ruined and humbled?
>
> Yet it almost seems as if Herr Hitler knows no God but brute force and, as Mr. Chamberlain says, he will listen to nothing else. It is in the midst of this catastrophe without parallel that Congressmen and all other responsible Indians individually and collectively have to decide what part India is to play in this terrible drama.[1]

1 Sitaramayya: *The History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. II (1935-1947), pp. 127-8.

The Congress lost no time in lengthy discussions. In an urgently convened meeting of the Working Committee on September 8, it passed a lengthy resolution on September 15, 1939. This resolution, as characterised by Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah the next day, was "a beautiful essay on foreign and international affairs, but completely devoid of statesmanship".

The resolution unequivocally and "unhesitatingly condemned the aggression of the Nazi Government in Germany against Poland and sympathized with those who resisted it". It, however, disapproved of "any imposed decision or attempt to use India's resources", and said:

> If co-operation is desired in a worthy cause, this cannot be obtained by compulsion and imposition. . . Co-operation must be between equals by mutual consent for a cause which both consider to be worthy. . .

The resolution, also, very clearly laid emphasis on the fact that

> their sympathies in entirety were on the side of democracy and freedom. . . a free democratic India will gladly associate herself with other free nations for mutual defence against aggression and for economic co-operation.

The resolution, however, completely ignored the question of communal settlement, and the Congress, speaking on behalf of the whole of India, clearly indicated to the British statesmen that if a democratic government was set up at the Centre it would fully co-operate with the British in its war effort. On the other hand, it expressed concern that India was declared a belligerent country without asking her opinion. The Congress leaders were aggrieved at the Viceroy's

indifference in not consulting them before involving India in war.

The History of the Indian National Congress records that the attitude of Jawaharlal in the Working Committee was in favour of negotiating with the government for independence. But Gandhiji favoured an unconditional moral support and co-operation. It reads:

> Gandhi was of the view that we must offer our moral support, allow the ministries to function and he had the confidence that through the ministers, he could manoeuvre a declaration of Poorna Swaraj or Dominion Status, a declaration of the next step—the same that Jawahar expected by negotiation. In both cases the contingency of a promise not being fulfilled did exist, but under Gandhi's technique, the chance of the fulfilment of such a declaration was certainly greater. For then a moral obligation would have to be fulfilled, not one arising from negotiation.[1]

With this resolution in hand the Congress leaders, including the provincial ministers, duly supported by the strong Congress press, began to cajole and coerce the British Government. Gandhiji, in his own characteristic manner, started hobnobbing with the Viceroy. Writing under the head "Myth of Majority" in *Harijan* on October 21, 1939, he said:

> Consider for one moment, what can happen if the English were to withdraw all of a sudden and there was no foreign usurper to rule. It may be said that the Punjabis, be they Muslims, Sikhs or others, will overrun India. It is highly likely that the Gurkhas will throw in their lot with the Punjabis. Assume further that non-Punjabi Muslims will make common cause with the Punjabis.

1 *Ibid.*, p. 130.

> Where will the Congressmen, composed chiefly of Hindus, be? If they are still truly non-violent, they will be left unmolested by the warriors. Congressmen won't want to divide power with the warriors, but will refuse to let them exploit their unarmed countrymen. Thus, if anybody has cause to keep the British rule for protection from the stronger element, it is the Congressmen and those Hindus and others who are represented by the Congress. The question, therefore, resolves, itself into not who is numerically superior, but who is stronger. Surely, there is only one answer. Those who raise the cry of minority in danger have nothing to fear from the so-called majority which is merely a paper-majority and which, in any event, is ineffective because it is weak in the military sense.

Thus, in a skilful manner, Gandhiji impressed upon the British public opinion that the Hindus were their real friends and that the question of minorities was a mere fiction. A year later, Mr. Jinnah on November 17, 1940, speaking in the Central Legislative Assembly, exposed the myth of this article of Mahatma Gandhi in his familiar tone. After reading the relevant portions of the article, he remarked:

> I ask this house, I ask any intelligent man, what does this mean? 21st of October last year, after the resolution of the All-India Congress Committee of the 10th October, within less than 20 days Mr. Gandhi writes this article. That resolution if you honestly believe in it asks for complete independence, the right of the people of India to frame their own constitution by a constituent assembly to be elected by adult franchise. But here what does this mean? He was telling the British Government, you settle with me, I am more desirous to maintain your supre-

Obviously it was a bait to entice Mr. Jinnah to abandon his demand for Pakistan. However, it is irrelevant here to discuss how wrong Maulana Azad's opinion about Mr. Jinnah was. What, however, must needs be emphasized here is the fact that only Azad made this proposal in order to avoid the division of India, and so Gandhi formally placed it before the Viceroy. But the Congress Working Committee, particularly Jawaharlal and Patel, opposed the proposal tooth and nail. They could not tolerate even the idea of a Muslim Leaguer becoming the Prime Minister of India, even though it would have been for a short and transitory period, and as an alternative to the division of India. Consequently they forced Gandhi to withdraw the proposal which he ultimately did.[1]

These are proofs, if proofs be needed, and proofs, at once patent and eloquent, of Hindu communalism and Congress parochial outlook.

Commenting on how the Muslims were cut off from the Congress, Palme Dutt says:

> Nor was this disastrous error (to identify national awakening with a revival of Hinduism) confined to the Nationalists or so-called "Extremists" of the older period. It continued in the modern period, and was most prominent in the entire agitation and propaganda of Gandhi. In all Gandhi's propaganda the preaching of Hinduism and his religious conception and preaching of the general political aims were inextricably mixed. At the very height of the national Non-co-operation Movement of 1920-22 when Gandhi stood as the leader of the united national movement and had the responsibility to make his every utterance as the leader of a united movement, he was publicly proclaiming himself "Sanatanist Hindu"

1 *Ibid.*, p 137 f.

(a kind of extremist, as it were "*ultra-montane*" Hindu):

"I call myself a Sanatani Hindu, because—

(1) I believe in the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Puranas and all that goes by the name Hindu scriptures, and therefore in avataras and rebirth.

(2) I believe in the Varnashrama Dharma, in a sense in my opinion strictly Vedic, but not in its present popular and crude sense.

(3) I believe in the protection of the cow in its much larger sense than the popular.

(4) I do not disbelieve in idol-worship."

(Gandhi, in *Young India*, October 12, 1921.)

In order to understand what the term "Sanatanist" conveys to a wider public, it is sufficient to recall Nehru's description:

"The Hindu Mahasabha is left far behind in this backward moving race by the Sanatanists, who combine religious obscurantism of an extreme type with fervent, or at any rate loudly expressed loyalty to British rule."

(Jawaharlal Nehru, *Autobiography*, p. 382.)

Even when appealing for Hindu-Moslem unity, Gandhi made the appeal, not as a national leader appealing to both sections, but as a Hindu leader: the Hindus were "we"; the Moslems were "they":

"We shall have to go in for *tapasya*, for self-purification, if we want to win the hearts of Mussalmans."

(Gandhi, in *Young India*, September 1924.)

At any moment throughout the modern national struggle Gandhi could pass from Congress politics to a Hindu reform movement (as in

the crisis of the struggle in 1932-33) and vice versa.

Thus the chosen leader of the National Congress and its principal representative in the public eye, appeared throughout as the active leader of Hinduism and of Hindu revival. Is it any wonder that under these conditions (and while the principal crime in this respect has been that of Gandhi, the same methods have been characteristic of a host of lesser lights in the Congress camp, especially those belonging to the Gandhist inspiration and tendency), with such an officially recognised leadership and propaganda, the National Congress should be widely stigmatised, not only by enemy critics, but even by a considerable body of general opinion, as a "Hindu movement"? It spoke much for their national devotion that a select body of Moslem leaders faithfully stood by the Congress under these conditions. But these methods could not win a mass Moslem following.[1]

Dreams of Hindu Ascendancy

This attitude unfortunately persisted throughout during the course of negotiations for the transfer of power. Twenty-seven months of Congress rule in all but three provinces during 1937-39 had made the Hindus conscious of their strength and power to regain their ancient glory. Moreover, the modern concept of democracy based on parliamentary system and majority rule had revived the hope in Hindu leaders of gradually inheriting power from the British in a constitutional manner. Every instalment of power given to India meant the revival and fulfilment of their dreams. During 1937-39 they found that with the co-operation of the British the chances of restoring

1 R. Palme Dutt, pp. 237-8.

their pristine pre-Muslim power were approaching fast. The Muslims were also closely watching the ambitions and aspirations of the Hindus. They had realized from past experience that mere constitutional safeguards and political agreement would hardly help them. Also, that Brahmanism in the garb of Indian nationalism would soon devour them, de-culturize them and retard their spontaneous political growth. Faced with such a catastrophe, the Muslims reorganized themselves under the banner of the Muslim League and became determined to fight to the last the Hindu designs to oust them from political life and to neutralize them. This occurred chiefly after the Congress assumed power in 1937. So that by 1939 the position of the Muslim League had become fairly strong, and, moreover, even the British Government had come to realize the growing position of the Muslims as a community, if not a nation.

War breaks out

On September 3, 1939, Britain declared war against Germany. The Congress was fully aware that the British Government would need their help and co-operation. Mahatma Gandhi's services for the First World War (1914-1918) were well known. He had, as we have seen, recruited soldiers for the British Army throughout the period of war without demanding anything in return. This time there was, however, a God-sent opportunity for him to bargain. The Congress, being in power in the provinces, was then a part and parcel of the Government and could effectively mobilize the Hindu masses for voluntary co-operation with war effort in India. In return, they should get control of the country's administration on

macy here, than the Punjabis and the Gurkhas. Mr. Gandhi becomes a convert to this artistic resolution of the 10th October when he found that this was not going to do the trick and when he realized it, he became a convert and he found that it was a panacea for all and every kind of ills the people of India are suffering from. What was the panacea? The Constituent Assembly.

League invited to Parleys

The Congress expected that the Viceroy would ultimately enter into negotiations with Gandhiji as the exclusive spokesman of Indian opinion and, on the lines of Gandhi-Irwin Pact, a pact would be made. But now the situation was entirely different. There was in the Muslim League the third—and what more, the most dynamic and organized—party. The consequences of the follies of pursuing a unilateral and arbitrary policy by the Congress had by now begun taking shape. Had Muslim League been taken into confidence and the Muslims been treated fairly under the Congress ministries, there would have been no question of challenging the leadership of Gandhi in Indian affairs. Muslims as a minority community would have had no right to raise their heads, or openly flout the dictates of Wardha. But by now the Muslims had become a "nation" and the Muslim League had already asserted that the Muslims would in future negotiate on terms of equality. The demands of "effective safeguards", the Governor's special responsibilities and the provincial autonomy had failed to produce any favourable result. Mr. Jinnah had unequivocally denounced the scheme of federation and provincial autonomy in his official capacity and had announced that undiluted western type of democracy could not

function in India. *The India-Pakistan Year Book*, 1948, compiled by the *Times of India* records the following reaction on this aspect:

> This attack on provincial autonomy and on majority rule was an altogether new line which was struck almost for the first time by the League. Till then the Muslim demand had always been for effective safeguards for the protection of the Muslim community's religious, cultural and other rights; now the Muslims began to question the very basis of democracy and declared that the western democracy in the sense of rule by majority was unsuitable.[1]

On September 17 and 18, 1939, the All-India Muslim League Council and Working Committee met at Delhi. Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan, the then Chief Minister of the Punjab, had issued a statement just after the declaration of war in which he had offered unstinted support to the allies on behalf of the Punjab. The Council called upon him to explain as to why he had made the offer without the permission of the League President. The Working Committee took a straight, clear and forthright attitude. There was no confusion, no bargaining, no manoeuvrings. It stated:

> If full, effective and honourable co-operation of the Mussalmans is desired by the British Government in the grave crisis which is facing the world today and if it is desired to bring it to a successful termination it must create a sense of security and satisfaction among the Mussalmans and take into their confidence the Muslim League, which is the only organization that can speak on behalf of Muslim India.[2]

1 *The India-Pakistan Year Book*, 1948, p. 908.

2 *The War! Problem of India's Future Constitution! What Muslim India and its leader, M. A. Jinnah, Think?*, p. 5.

The League President also sent a formal communication to the Viceroy embodying the demands of Muslim India on the fulfilment of which they would support the Government in its war effort.

The demands were:

(i) That the British Government should review and revise the entire problem of India's future constitution *de novo* in the light of the experience gained by the working of the present provincial constitution, and developments that have taken place since 1939 or which may take place thereafter.

(ii) While the Muslim League stands for a free India, it is irrevocably opposed to any federal objective which must necessarily result in a majority community rule, under the garb of democracy and parliamentary system of Government.

(iii) No declaration regarding the question of constitutional advance for India should be made without the consent and approval of the All-India Muslim League, nor any constitution be framed and finally adopted by His Majesty's Government and the British Parliament without such consent and approval.

To conclude, a constitution must be evolved that recongnizes that there are in India two nations who both must share the governance of their common motherland. In evolving such a constitution the Muslims are ready to co-operate with the British Government, the Congress or any party so that the enmities may cease and India may take its place among the great countries of the world.

About the national Government too, the position of the League was clear. If the Muslim League was to participate actively in the Government's war effort,

it must have an effective share in the government—both at the Centre and the provinces. In case, the Congress joined the Government, the Muslims should have parity with Hindus. If the Congress stayed out, the leadership of the Government should be given to the League and the Hindu nominees should be appointed in consultation with it. Mr. Jinnah's approach from the very outset was very bold and realistic. He would never seek shelter behind the exuberance of words or sentiments. Nor would be shed tears on the expected danger to London through bombardment as Gandhi did. About a year later, he (Jinnah) spoke in the Assembly on November 19, 1940, with candidness and courage, and said:

> Well, if the Government tell me and if they want to put fear into my heart by advancing the argument that if England is defeated what will happen to us, then all I can say is that I do not want England to be defeated. I have never said so. But might I not say that if England is defeated, who will lose more? You or I. If England is defeated, then England not only loses its liberty, its freedom and not only it may come under the heels of the Nazis, but nothing is left to her. Might I not say to the Government that you are in a much greater danger than I am? Is that going to help us? You may for the purpose of propaganda to the unwary and ignorant say: "Oh, if England is defeated, what will be India's position? Your liberty or even aspiration to responsible government, your religion, your churches and your mosques will be demolished." It may be so. But is that going really to do the trick or is it not open to the retort which I mentioned just now?

In September 1939, the Viceroy initiated negotiations with the political parties. He also invited the

President of the Muslim League on equal terms. This surprised the Congress and caused dismay among its leaders. They were, however, unaware of the fact that through their own lapses the Muslim League's status had risen by leaps and bounds. They had expected the British Government to help and co-operate with them as the latter had done during the 27-month Congress rule in the provinces. Also, they lost sight of the fact that most of the soldiers, who were destined to fight on the front, were Muslims, belonging to the Muslim majority provinces of north-western India. The British could not afford to make the League hostile, especially since the League could do more harm to their war effort than the Congress ever could. The Viceroy, therefore, tried to reconcile both the viewpoints.

On October 18, 1939, he made a public announcement (which was reiterated in an amplified form on August 8, 1940). Therein he reaffirmed that freedom would be granted to India soon after the war and that the Government of India Act would be replaced by a fresh constitution, framing of which "should be primarily the responsibility of Indians themselves". The statement had also said that full weight should be given to the views of minorities in any constitutional change. Moreover, it added that "they (the British) could not contemplate transfer of their present responsibilities for the peace and welfare of India to any system of government whose authority is directly denied by large and powerful elements in India's national life". This assurance was also conveyed to the League President in reply to his communication. The resolutions of the Working Com-

mittees of the Congress and the League passed in September 1939, were made annexures to the October statement of the Viceroy.[1]

The Congress was not at all satisfied with this declaration primarily because the League's demand was also given due consideration. No tangible result could, therefore, be gained from the tripartite negotiations initiated by the Viceroy. The Congress commanded their ministries to resign in protest of the Viceroy's declaration. And in compliance with its instructions, the Congress ministries in the provinces resigned. This action of the Congress, though it was a bad strategy, yet proved to be a very powerful weapon to impress world opinion. The situation thus created increased the bargaining position of the Congress. As stated earlier, the Muslim League celebrated the exit of the Congress ministries by holding public meetings of thanksgiving ("Deliverance Day") to Almighty for ridding the country of the atrocious Congress *raj*, all over the country on December 22, 1939. This tactical move on the League's part deprived the Congress of its strategy, which prompted the resignations. The world, which was otherwise ignorant of the misdeeds of the Congress and maltreatment of the Muslims at its hands, came to know how a powerful section of Indians was opposed to Congress rule.

The Congress, however, used all the weapons in its armoury to intimidate the Government into handing over the administration of the whole country to it. In its Tripura Session, in March, 1940, the Congress threatened the Government with a civil disobedience movement if its demands were not accepted.

1 Sitaramayya, Vol. II, p. 140.

Mahatma Gandhi was consequently invested with dictatorial powers to launch the movement.

The Muslim League, especially after the official declaration of the policy of the Government, had no programme to obstruct war effort. The Muslim provinces of Punjab, Bengal and Assam were already helping the Government in this regard. But the League, unless it was given equal share in the new central set up, could not officially mobilize Muslim opinion in support of the Allies. The League's policy in respect of war was recorded by *The India-Pakistan Year Book* as follows:

> In yet another direction the League manoeuvred itself into a comfortable position; whereas, the Congress categorically withheld its co-operation from the war, the League abstained from taking any such attitude and merely insisted on the satisfaction of its claims prior to making up its mind. Even this was only the official attitude of the League as an organization. Most of its individual members were in favour of wholeheartedly aiding in the prosecution of the war. And the League winked at this.

Pakistan Resolution

The arbitrary and autocratic attitude of the Congress had driven the Muslims to sheer desperation. During 1938-39, resolutions requesting the League high command to demand the division of the country were passed in various League conferences and public meetings. The Muslim League speakers and writers had started agitating, from press and platform, for self-determination of Muslims in their majority areas. Various schemes of zonal federation were under the study of Muslim thinkers under the aegis of the League's various sub-committees.

The League Council had appointed in early 1938 an inquiry committee under the chairmanship of Raja Saheb of Pirpur to enquire into the allegations of atrocities by the Muslims in the Congress administered provinces. The report, popularly known as the Pirpur Report, containing the details of the acts of high-handedness and maltreatment on the part of the Congress ministries, was released in December 1938.

In 1939 a group of intellectuals, under the guidance of the late Dr. Zafarul Ahsan, studied the various schemes of division and recommended and pressed strongly in favour of the Pakistan scheme. It may be mentioned here that in 1930, just before the Round Table Conference, Allama Iqbal, while presiding over the annual League session at Allahabad, had strongly advocated the establishment, within or without India, of an autonomous state of north-western Muslim majority provinces. When the Allama went to the Round Table Conference he suggested to an enthusiastic League student worker, Chaudhry Rahmat Ali, that the proposed state should be named PAKISTAN. Chaudhry Rahmat Ali, inspired by the name and conception of the scheme of Pakistan, made it from that very moment his lifelong objective to propagate it in the U. K. The Muslim students, who went to Cambridge or Oxford, generally became converts to this idea of Pakistan under the influence of Chaudhry. He worked for it till his objective was achieved, though the shape in which Pakistan came did not satisfy him. It was against his conception and he considered it as the "betrayal of a nation". He died a heart-broken man.

Against this background the hostile attitude of the Congress to the Muslims turned them irrevocably

to the goal of Pakistan. The Muslims of India gathered in hundreds of thousands at the Lahore Annual Session of the All-India Muslim League from March 19 to 23, 1940. On March 23, the historic resolution demanding the division of India into two sovereign states comprising the Muslim and Hindu majority regions, with effective safeguards for minorities, was passed with acclamation.[1]

This resolution completely changed the course of political events in India. There was no longer any talk of safeguards, reservation of seats, special powers of the Governors or any other demand in relation to a composite state. At the Madras Annual Session in April 1941, the Pakistan Resolution was made the creed of the League, and its aims and objects were amended to include the following:

> (i) The establishment of completely Independent States formed by demarcating geographically contiguous units into regions which shall be so constituted with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority as in the North-Western and Eastern zones of India shall be grouped together to constitute Independent States as Muslim Free National Homelands in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign;
>
> (ii) That adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards shall be specifially provided in the constitution for minorities in the abovementioned units and regions for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political and administrative rights and interests in consultation with them;

1 The resolution is reproduced in the appendix.

(iii) That in other parts of India where the Mussalmans are in a minority, adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards shall be specifically provided in the constitution for them and other minorities for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political and administrative rights and interests in consultation with them.

In his Presidential Address at the Madras Session, Mr. Jinnah said:

> We do not want in any circumstance a constitution of an All-India character with one government at the centre. We will never agree to that; let me tell you, the Muslims will be absolutely wiped out of existence. We shall never be tributaries of any power or any government at the Centre.

Exposing the tactics of the Congress, he said:

> "What does the Congress want?" The Congress had taken up a position, about which there was not the slighest doubt in the minds of any one. I would like to ask any man with any grain of sense, "Do you think that Mr. Gandhi, the supreme Commander and the General of this Army, has started this *satyagraha* merely for the purpose of getting liberty of speech? Do you agree with me that this is nothing but a weapon of coercion for blackmailing the British who are in a tight corner to concede to the Congress the demands that they insisted upon?. . . ."
>
> It is the Congress and the Congress alone which has adopted the attitude of, sometimes dictation, sometimes cajoling, sometimes fooling and bamboozling and sometimes trying to deceive you. I say to the Congress leaders and the Hindu leaders, "please drop these methods".[1]

1 Home Study Series, No. 2, pp. 9-11.

From then onwards, the demand for Pakistan was the keypoint of all the tripartite negotiations. The Muslim League's power and popularity grew almost daily and the position of the Congress was becoming proportionately shaky. *The India-Pakistan Year Book*, 1948, sums up the situation as follows:

> The Pakistan ideal began to exercise the Muslim mind. It provided the League and the Quaid-i-Azam with a new plank, gave the Muslim community a new goal, a new vista free from what was described as "the danger of Hindu *Raj*". Every development affecting the future of India in any way was viewed against the background of Pakistan; how will more power for the future Indian State affect the Muslims? Therefore the League claimed the right to approve or reject every proposal calculated to affect the country and its population. The threat was put forth that "any move by the Congress to widen political power in India without the League's approval will meet with the League's resistance".

In the meantime, the British Government also began to realize the growing influence, and the representative character of the Muslim League so far as the Muslims of India were concerned. The Quaid-i-Azam never slackened his demand for Pakistan, though he expressed his willingness not to raise that question in a pointed form while the war was in progress, provided the League got a fair share in any transitional arrangement made during the war period.

Congress becomes desperate

The Congress, with Mr. Gandhi as its mouthpiece, was still averse to recognizing the League's representative character. Instead of co-operating with the League, the Congress leaders tried to threaten and intimidate. Moreover, they employed their so-called

peaceful weapon of civil disobedience, not so much to coerce the Government for independence, but to intimidate it into surrendering power solely and exclusively to the Congress. With this end in view, they were shifting from one strategy to another. In 1939, the heart of Gandhiji was melting for the British people and he was advising Hitler not to disturb the peace of the world. But in early 1940, he was appealing through an open letter to the British people to make peace with Hitler through the technique of non-violence, and to dump their arms into the English Channel. In the beginning of the war he was in full support of the Government for its War effort. He also favoured that the Congress ministries should continue in office in order to extend all moral support for the war, but after October 18, 1939, he turned a pacifist of the first order, who would not advise any association with war, however passive that might be. He would negotiate with the Muslim League, but only to console and assure the Muslims of his good treatment. On June 15, 1940, he explained the position of the Congress *vis-a-vis* other parties in an article in the *Harijan*:

> Public and private appeals are being made to me to call all parties together and arrive at a common agreement, and then, they say, we shall get what we want from Great Britain. These good friends forget one central fact. The Congress, which professes to speak for India and wants unadulterated Independence, cannot strike a common measure of agreement with those who do not. . . .
>
> The British Government would not ask for a common agreement, if they recognized any one party to be strong enough to take delivery. The

> Congress, it must be admitted, has not that strength today. It has come to its present position in the face of opposition. If it does not weaken and has enough patience, it will develop sufficient strength to take delivery. It is an illusion created by ourselves that we must come to an agreement with all parties before we can make any progress.
>
> There is only one democratically elected political organization, i.e., the Congress. All the others are self-appointed or elected on a sectional basis. The Muslim League is an organization which, like the Congress, is popularly elected. But it is frankly communal and wants to divide India into two parts. . . .
>
> Thus for the present purpose there are only two parties—the Congress and those who side with the Congress, and the parties who do not. Between the two there is no meeting ground without the one or the other surrendering its purpose. . . .

In the second week of July 1940 Maulana Azad, the newly elected President of the Congress, obviously on the advise of Gandhiji, tried to involve Mr. Jinnah in the controversy of the interim central government. Maulana Azad sent a telegram to Mr. Jinnah on the pretext of getting clarification about the League stand. The Maulana did so in the capacity of the Congress President, though the Mahatma always spoke for the Congress both before the Viceroy and the public. This move, especially when Mr. Jinnah had already refused to talk to Gandhiji in the company of Azad in early 1938, was only to confuse the issue and to demonstrate to the outside world that there was no Hindu-Muslim problem. The telegram of the Maulana read:

> I have read your statement of July 9. The Delhi resolution of the Congress definitely means

> by national government a composite cabinet not limited to any single party. But is it the position of the League that she cannot agree to any provisional arrangement not based on two nation scheme? If so please clarify by wire.

Straight came the reply from Mr. Jinnah:

> I have received your telegram. I cannot reciprocate confidence. I refuse to discuss with you by correspondence or otherwise as you have completely forfeited the confidence of Muslim India. Cannot you realise you are made a Muslim show-boy Congress President to give it colour that it is national and deceive foreign countries? You represent neither Muslims nor Hindus. The Congress is a Hindu body. If you have self-respect resign at once. You have done your worst against the League so far. You know you have hopelessly failed. Give it up.[1]

The game was up and squarely foiled, and the circumstances added to the fury of the Congress furore. In its wake came the August 8th Declaration of the Viceroy, which made the Congress leaders more desperate and resentful.

Amery's Speech and Gandhiji's Reply

On August 14, 1940, Mr. L. S. Amery, the then Secretary of State for India, made a speech in the House of Commons, in which he dilated on the relative strength of the Congress and the League in the following words:

> It is true that they (the Congress) are numerically the largest single party in British India. But their claim in virtue of that fact to speak for India is utterly denied by very important elements in India's complex national life. These other elements assert their right to be

1 Sitaramayya, Vol. II. p. 202.

regarded not as mere numerical minorities but as separate constituent factors in any future Indian policy entitled to be treated as such in any discussions for the shaping of India's future constitution. The foremost among these elements stands the great Muslim community of ninety millions strong and constituting a majority both in north-western and north-eastern India but scattered as minority over the whole sub-continent. In religious and social outlook, in historic tradition and culture, the difference between them and their Hindu fellow-countrymen goes as deep, if not deeper than any similar difference in Europe. That need not, and does not, prevent pleasant social intercourse or fruitful political co-operation. It has not, in fact, prevented individual Muslims taking an active part in the work of the Congress Party. But, as a body, the Muslims have stood aloof. Their quarrel with the scheme of the existing Act is not that it fails to give that clear majority rule which the Congress asks for but that it would give too great powers to a Hindu majority at the Centre. They will have nothing to do with a Constitution framed by a Constituent Assembly elected by a majority vote in geographical constituencies. They claim the right, in any constitutional discussions, to be regarded as an entity and are determined only to accept a constitution whose actual structure will secure their position as an entity against the operations of a mere numerical majority.[1]

The speech of Mr. Amery was obviously not sweet smelling for the Congress. All its claims and demands in regard to its self-proclaimed monopoly in Indian affairs were frustrated. Gandhiji declared war against the Government and launched individual *satyagrah*. Vinobha Bhave was the first to court arrest.

1 *The Indian Annual Register*, 1940, Vol. II, p. 375.

Soon after, Jawaharlal, Subhas Bose and Maulana Azad, along with some members of the Working Committee, were arrested.

Amery's statement of August was bad enough for the Congress. But the worse was still to follow. The Congress had been declaring *ad nauseum* that the communal problem was the creation of the British. As soon as the Government should decide to quit India, the Congress asserted, it would present an agreed constitution. In fact, Gandhiji had repeatedly said that if the British granted complete independence to India the Congress would offer the control of the central government to Jinnah and would fully co-operate with the government that he would form.

Soon after the War began, the then Congress President, Dr. Rajendra Prashad, had declared formally and officially:

> Let the British Government throw on Indians the responsibility of producing an agreed constitution without any interference from outside and promise to give statutory effect to it. That will be a genuine offer. Without it all talks of protection of minorities looks like an excuse for perpetuating the status quo.[1]

Commenting on the statement of the Viceroy dated November 1, 1939, Mahatma Gandhi had said:

> Once a declaration to free India from bondage, not in stages but at once, is made, an interim solution will be found to be easy. Minorities are entitled to protection, not in stages but to the fullest extent and in one single step. No charter of freedom will be worth looking at which does not ensure the same measure of freedom for the minorities as for the majority. The minorities will be full-fledged partners in the framing of the

1 Sitaramayya, Vol. II, p. 144.

constitution. How that can be attained will depend upon the wisdom of the representatives charged with the sacred duty of preparing the constitution. Britain has hitherto held power—this is inevitable in any system of imperialism—by playing the minorities against the so-called majority and has thus made an agreed solution among the component parts well-nigh impossible. The burden of finding a formula for the protection of minorities should be thrown on the parties themselves.[1]

When the declarations of October 1939 and August 1940, were made by the British Government, the Congress had begun to waver. But on April 22, 1941, Mr. Amery declared that the British had no intention to perpetuate their rule and that the British Government would, immediately after the War, give effect to any constitution to which the Indians would agree. "It was that the framework of India's future constitution should be devised by Indians themselves, not by this House," Mr. Amery said: "The time-table of India's constitutional advance depends far more upon a Indian agreement than upon ourselves". He further remarked:

> Even more important in this connection is the stipulation that the constitution itself, and also the body which is to frame it, must be the outcome of agreement between the principal elements in India's national life. That is an essential pre-requisite to the success of the future constitution.
>
> For if the Indians cannot agree upon the kind of constitution they are prepared to work, how are they likely to agree upon the actual working of it?[2]

1 *Ibid.*, p. 150.
2 Home Study Series, No. 2, p. 21,

This declaration exposed the hollowness of the Congress claims. Gandhiji came forward with a statement, different in tone and with an entirely new approach. He gave up his previous pretensions. No longer would he reiterate his old demands. Prior settlement of communal question was no longer his creed. He said:

> I admit that there is unfortunately an unbridgeable gulf between the Congress and the Muslim League. Why do not British statesmen admit that it is after all a domestic quarrel? Let them withdraw from India and I promise that the Congress and the League and all other parties will find it to their interest to come together and devise a home-made solution for the Government of India. It may not be scientific; it may not be after any western pattern; but it will be durable. It may be that before we come to that happy state of affairs we may have to fight between ourselves. But if we agree not to invite the assistance of any outside power, the trouble will last perhaps a fortnight, and will not mean even one day's destruction of human heads, such as goes in Europe today.

The policy of the British Government towards the League and the Congress had become quite clear by the declarations of October 1939, and August 1940 of the Viceroy. Amery's speech of April 1941 in the Parliament put a seal on it. They were sympathetic towards minorities, but not to the extent of accepting Pakistan. Both the Viceroy and the British War Cabinet were keen to retain the so-called unity of India. Mr. Amery had given a very clear indication of his mind when he said during the debate in the House of Commons on April 22, 1941:

> I am not concerned here to discuss the immense practical difficulties in the way of this so-called Pakistan project stated in its extreme form, nor need I go back to the dismal record of India's history in the 18th century or to the disastrous experience of the Balkan countries before our eyes today, in order to point out the terrible dangers inherent in any break-up of the essential unity of India at any rate in its relation to the outside world.
>
> After all there is no British achievement in India of which we have better reason to be proud than the unity, internal peace and reign of law which we have given her.[1]

Besides, the British Government was not prone to accept the claims of the Muslim League for equal representation at the Centre. Mr. Amery disclosed:

> As regards the more immediate policy of extension of the Viceroy's Council, acceptance in principle unfortunately did not lead to actual agreement in detail. The Muslim League in particular asked for measure of representation as against Hindu elements and made stipulations as to future which the Viceroy could not see his way to accepting.[2]

The Muslim League refused to enter the Viceroy's expanded Executive Council and the Defence Council and had, moreover, directed its members not to participate in the war committees or other activities of war effort. The ministries were, however, allowed to work in their official capacity. Similar steps were also taken by the Congress. It allowed the Frontier Congress ministry, and later on Bengal, Sindh and Assam coalition ministries to function, though all other Congress ministries had resigned. If the Viceroy had

1 *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20. 2 *Ibid.*, p. 24.

included the League chief ministers in the Defence Council in their official capacity, the League could not have raised any objection. But Lord Linlithgow, perhaps without realising the consequences of double-dealing with Jinnah, who could hardly be beaten in strategy or tactics, informed the Muslim League premiers that they were being taken in the Cabinet in their *ex officio* position. He conveyed to Mr. Jinnah through Sir Roger Lumeley, the Governor of Bombay, that they were nominated as the representatives of the great Muslim community. But the Governor could not convey the Viceroy's message verbally as he fell ill. He had to convey it in writing on July 20, 1941. The message said:

> In addition, the Viceroy does not feel that, because of the difficulty in securing the support of the major political parties, it is possible to delay further the more active association of non-official Indian opinion with the prosecution of the war. He is, accordingly, forming with the approval of His Majesty's Government, a National Defence Council. The Council will consist of some thirty members, nine of whom will be drawn from the Indian States. The Viceroy regards it as essential that the great Muslim community should be represented on that Council by persons of the highest prominence and capacity. He has, accordingly, invited the Premiers of Assam, Bengal, the Punjab and Sind to serve as members on it, and he has extended invitations also to certain other prominent Muslims, such as Sir Mahomed Usman. He has considered whether he should invite you to let him have any suggestions as to the possible personnel for this Council, but being aware, as he is, of your general attitude, he has concluded that it would be preferable not to embrass you by inviting you to make suggestions.

To this Quaid-i-Azam replied the next day:

I appreciate when he says that he does not wish to embarrass me by inviting me to make suggestions, knowing, as he does, not only my general attitude but that of the All-India Muslim League. Further, I cannot approve of his having invited the Muslim League Premiers or any other Muslim Leaguer under the scheme of the expansion of the Viceroy's Council, as well as what is now called the National Defence Council, because it is obvious that it would embarrass the Muslim League organization, and I do hope and trust that His Excellency will avoid such a contingency. Besides, it is hardly fair or proper that they should be approached by His Excellency over the head of the President and the executive of the All-India Muslim League, knowing full well the position and the attitude that the All-India Muslim League has adopted.

It is stated in his message that the Viceroy regards it as essential that the 'great Muslim community should be represented by persons of the highest prominence and capacity'. Would it be creditable for any individual prominent or capable Muslim, belonging to an organization, to accept the invitation contrary to the position and the attitude taken up by that organization, and would it do any credit to the Government if they succeed in alluring him and create a breach in the organization, in the hope that he may throw up his allegiance to the party to which he belongs in order to accept the invitation of His Excellency? I maintain that the great Muslim community is represented authoritatively only by the All-India Muslim League organization. Persistence in the course will not improve matters, but on the contrary it will lead to bitterness on the part of the Muslim League which up to the present moment, fortunately, does not exist, however,

emphatically we have disapproved of the policy which has been pursued by His Majesty's Government and the Viceroy.

In August, the Working Committee considered this question. Sir Sikander, the Punjab Premier, was till then all out for war effort, and had accepted the Viceroy's invitation to join the Defence Council. He was, however, completely unaware of the correspondence between the Bombay Governor, acting as the Viceroy's agent, and Mr. Jinnah. So that when the correspondence was placed before the Working Committee, Sir Sikander realized the gravity of the situation, promptly responded to the call of the Working Committee, and resigned from the Defence Council. He resented that "he was double-crossed" by the Viceroy. His resignation was followed by the resignations of other premiers also. The Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, and Sir Sikander were never on speaking terms after this incident.

This incident obviously raised the stature of Jinnah. It was no easy task to enforce discipline in the organization under the circumstances, which Jinnah was at that time facing. He was fighting the Viceroy, the Congress and the recalcitrant group in his own party. Despite these odds, heavy as they were, Jinnah was successful—successful in every respect. And the League emerged more triumphant than ever before.

CHAPTER VI

CRIPPS' PROPOSALS—"QUIT INDIA" MOVEMENT

THE advancing Japanese armies reached within striking distance of India in early 1942. This made it imperative for the British Government to seek some kind of a settlement with the Indian political parties. The British War Cabinet, therefore, sent out (March 1942) Sir Stafford Cripps, a member of the Cabinet, to India with a Draft Declaration, embodying long- and short-term proposals for the solution of the Indian constitutional question, and for the defence of the country against foreign aggression.

The Declaration invited "the immediate and effective participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the counsels of their country, of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations". Excepting Defence, the entire Indian administration was to be transferred to Indian hands. The Viceroy's Executive Council was to be Indianised, the members to be nominated not by the Viceroy at his personal discretion, but on the recommendation of the political parties.

The long-term proposal aimed at granting India Dominion Status immediately after the War, with the

right to secede from the Commonwealth. An elected Constituent Assembly was to frame a constitution for the Union of India which the British Government undertook to accept and implement forthwith. The provinces and states were given the right to opt out of the Union, and frame their own constitutions as sovereign units after a plebiscite had been held on the issue.

The Declaration fully conformed to the Congress standpoint so far as the issue of freedom was concerned. In fact, the whole scheme, excepting the clauses dealing with the right of the provinces to opt out, was based on the advice and recommendation of Gandhiji, Maulana Azad, and other Congress leaders whom Sir Stafford Cripps had consulted during his one-week stay at Wardha immediately after the outbreak of the War. He had prepared notes of the discussions and had supplied to the Congress President, Maulana Azad, and other leaders, a copy of his *aide-memoire* on which the constitutional and political aspects of the Declaration were based. At that time, the Maulana had assured Cripps on behalf of the Congress "that once the Indian people were convinced that the British Government really meant business, a way to adjust our differences could be found".[1]

These facts were commonly known and it was perhaps due to this reason that the news of the Cripps Mission to India sent a wave of joy among the Hindu leaders and public. This jubilation, however, was very short lived, for, as soon as the proposals were published the whole atmosphere in Wardha was overcast with clouds of gloom, mainly because the new scheme gave the provinces the right to secede. This upset the

1 *India Wins Freedom*, p. 47.

basis of the negotiations so much so that Gandhiji forgot all about his earlier discussions with Cripps. The Maulana has recorded this event in the following words:

> He also did not like the last part of the offer which said that after the war the Congress and the Muslim League would be given an opportunity to settle the communal issue.
>
> When Gandhiji met Cripps for the first time during this Mission, Cripps reminded him of the *aide-memoire* to which reference has already been made. Cripps said that the *aide-memoire* had been prepared after consultation with Congress leaders, including Gandhiji. Its substance was that during the war there would be complete Indianization of the Executive Council. After the war, India would be declared free. The proposals he had now brought were substantially the same.
>
> Gandhiji said that he had no recollection of the *aide-memoire*. All that he could remember of his talks with Cripps during his last visit were some discussions about vegetarianism. Cripps replied that it was his misfortune that Gandhiji could remember his talks on food but not the proposals he had so carefully prepared after consulting Gandhiji himself.[1]

There was a large volume of criticism against Cripps and his scheme in the Hindu press which could not relish the idea of the Muslim League ever realizing its demand of secession of certain areas from the Union. Cripps was described by the Hindu press as "crafty Cripps," the willing agent of a policy of "Machieavellian dissimulation, profound hypocrisy and perfidy, that knew no touch of remorse," who allowed himself to become the Devil's advocate.

1 *Ibid.*, p. 50.

The *India-Pakistan Year Book*, 1948, records this situation in the following words:

> Perhaps the highest marks scored by the League so far are to be found in the British War Cabinet's formula brought by Sir Stafford Cripps in the spring of 1942, in which the British Government offered to give to Indian provinces the right to choose whether they would join any union that might be decided to be formed at the end of hostilities or would stay out and form their own State, separately in collaboration with other provinces similarly willing to stay out. This was an unprecedented concession to the League demand, which was stoutly opposed by the Hindu element of the population and by nationalistic forces, although the Quaid-i-Azam himself would have liked the concession to be more specific and categorical.

Cripps knew the situation and had assessed the feelings of the Hindu leaders, but he could not personally convey his views to the Maulana because he was inavariably accompanied by Jawaharlal and could not meet him alone. Ultimately, he wrote a letter to Maulana Azad about which the Maulana says:

> While the Congress Working Committee was still in session, Cripps sent me a letter in which he said that though 'the Hindu press' had not welcomed the offer, he hoped that I would consider the proposal from a broader point of view. This reference to the Hindu press appeared very odd to me. It also occurred to me that perhaps he was putting the emphasis on the Hindu press because I am a Muslim. If he did not like the comments made by the press, he could easily have referred to the Indian press, or a section of it. I replied that I was surprised at his reference to the Hindu press and did not think that there was

> any justification for drawing such a distinction among the different sections of the Indian press. I assured him that the Congress Working Committee would consider the proposals only from an Indian point of view and it would take into consideration all sections of opinion before it came to a decision.

The Maulana refers to "the Indian point of view" in his comments on the letter, but Cripps knew very well why the Congress press was opposing the proposals. The Maulana himself has recorded the reasons for the Congress opposition to the proposals:

> An even greater snag was the option given to the Provinces to stay outside the Union. This as well as the solution of the communal problem suggested by Cripps had greatly disturbed Gandhiji. He had reacted violently against it. When I met him after my first interview with Cripps, I immediately realized that Gandhiji regarded the Cripps offer as totally unacceptable. He felt that it would only add to our difficulties and make a settlement of the communal problem impossible.
>
> I discussed in detail the implications of this item with Cripps. I asked him to tell us what exactly he and his colleagues in the War Cabinet had in view. Cripps tried to persuade me that the Indian political problem could not be solved till the communal problem was settled. This could be done in one of the two ways. One was to settle it forthwith. The other was to defer a decision till after the war, when power would be in Indian hands. Cripps said that in his opinion it would be wrong to raise the issue at present. It would only add to the difficulties. The only feasible thing was, therefore, to wait for the end of the war. He assured me, however, that if the Hindus and the Moslems could come to an agreement, a solution

could be reached even now.

I told Cripps that the right given to the Provinces to opt out meant opening the door to separation. Cripps tried to defend his position by pointing out that the right was given to a Province as a whole and not to any particular community. He was convinced that once the right of the Provinces to opt out was recognized, no province would, in fact, demand that right. Not to concede the right would on the other hand rouse suspicion and doubt. The Provinces would be able to look at the question objectively only when they felt that they had perfect freedom to decide as they chose.

After we had discussed this issue one morning, Cripps telephoned to me in the evening and said that Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan was coming to meet him the next day. Cripps hoped that Sir Sikandar would prove helpful in the solution of the communal problem. Punjab was a Muslim majority province and if Punjab decided to remain with India, this would give a lead to the other Muslim majority provinces. I told him that I was doubtful if Sir Sikandar could solve the problem but since he was coming to Delhi, I would be glad to see him. Sir Sikandar came to Delhi the next day and after meeting Cripps he saw me. He was of the view that the Cripps' offer was the best possible solution of the communal problem. He was convinced that if the matter was put to the vote of the Punjab Assembly, its decision would be on national and not on communal lines. I conceded that if the vote was now taken, his forecast was likely to be right, but as to what would happen after the end of the war was more than he or I could say. I told him that I could not accept that he would have the same influence then as he had now.[1]

1 *Ibid.*, p. 59.

These circumstances were, however, carefully and deliberately avoided in the official correspondence of the Congress with Cripps. Maulana Azad's letter to Cripps, incorporating the grounds of the rejection of the proposals, does not make the slightest reference to the communal aspect of the problem or to the right of the provinces to secede. The letter simply suggested posponement of consideration of the proposals till after the War, and demanded the immediate setting up of a truly national Government at the Centre, functioning as a cabinet with a Congress majority. Cripps, however, saw through the game and in his reply of April 11, 1942, *inter alia,* stated:

> The real substance of your refusal to take part in a National Government is that the form of government suggested is not such as would enable you to rally the Indian people as you desire.
>
> You make two suggestions. First, that the constitution might now be changed. In this respect I would point out that you made this suggestion for the first time last night, nearly three weeks after you had received the proposals, and I would further remark that every other representative with whom I have discussed this view has accepted the practical impossibility of any such legislative change in the middle of a war and at such a moment as the present.
>
> Second, you suggest 'a truly National Government' be formed, which must be a 'cabinet Government with full power.'
>
> Without constitutional changes of a most complicated character and on a very large scale this would not be possible, as you realize.
>
> Were such a system to be introduced by convention under the existing circumstances, the

> nominated cabinet (nominated presumably by the major political organizations) would be responsible to no one but itself, could not be removed and would in fact constitute an absolute dictatorship of the majority.
>
> This suggestion would be rejected by all minorities in India, since it would subject all of them to a permanent and autocratic majority in the Cabinet. Nor would it be consistent with the pledges already given by His Majesty's Government to protect the rights of those minorities.
>
> In a country such as India where communal divisions are still so deep an irresponsible majority government of this kind is not possible.
>
> Apart from this, however, until such time as the Indian people frame their new constitution, His Majesty's Government must continue to carry out its duties to those large sections of the Indian people to whom it has given its pledges.
>
> The proposals of His Majesty's Government went as far as possible short of a complete change in the constitution which is generally acknowledged as impracticable in the circumstances of today.

The Congress, in fact, wanted to gain immediate control of the Government through majority rule at the expense of the Muslims. It was no longer interested in the distant future, in the assurances and promises of independence after the War. Mahatmaji had, on that account, characterised the Cripps' Proposals as a 'post-dated cheque'. The scheme was consequently rejected.

This Congress attitude was summed up in a resolution, which the Muslim League Working Committee passed on August 24, 1942, dealing with the "Quit India" Movement of the Congress. It said:

> The negotiations of Sir Stafford Cripps with the Congress broke down not on the issue of independence but because of the refusal of the British Government to hand over the Muslims and the minorities to the tender mercies of the Congress. Any acquiesence in this on the part of the British would have been strenuously resisted by the minorities, and particularly, by the Muslim nation with the memories of tyranny in the Congress-governed provinces still fresh and vivid in their minds.

Jawaharlal himself gave the real reason for Congress rejection of the Cripps' proposals. In an article published in the New York *Times* on July 19, 1942, he wrote:

> Thirty years ago the British Government introduced the principle of separate religious electorates in India, a fatal thing which has come in the way of development of political parties. Now they have tried to introduce the idea of partitioning India not only into two but possibly many separate parts. . . . The All-India Congress could not agree to this.

And yet the common man in India was told that the Congress rejected the scheme because of its different approach on the question of freedom of India from that of the British War Cabinet.

The Quaid-i-Azam made a reference to this fact in his historic address to the Muslim League session at Delhi on April 24, 1943. He said:

> It was on the question of veto, or was it on the ground of Defence portfolio, or was it that the All-India Congress would not agree to any idea of Pakistan? To this country is given one version and to America another.

The League's viewpoint on the Cripps' Proposals, indeed on the current Indian situation, was put forth in categorical terms in a resolution passed by its Working Committee in April 1942. It said:

> The Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League have given their most earnest and careful consideration to the announcement made by Mr. Churchill, the British Prime Minister, in the House of Commons on the 11th of March, 1942, and the Draft Declaration of the War Cabinet of His Majesty's Government regarding the future of India and also the interim proposals, during the critical period which now faces India, for the immediate participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the counsels of their country.
>
> The Committee appreciate that the British Prime Minister, in his pronouncement, made it clear that the Draft Declaration embodied only the proposals of His Majesty's Government and not their decision, and that they are subject to agreement between the main elements in India, thus maintaining the validity of the declaration of the 8th of August, 1940, which had promised to the Musalmans that neither the machinery for the framing of the constitution should be set up nor the constitution itself should be enforeed without the approval and consent of Muslim India.
>
> The Working Committee, while expressing their gratification that the possibility of Pakistan is recognized by implication by providing for the establishment of two or more independent Unions in India, regret that the proposals of His Majesty's Government, embodying the fundamentals, are not open to any modification and therefore no alternative proposals are invited. In view of the rigidity of the attitude of His Majesty's Government with regard to the fundamentals not being

open to any modification, the Committee have no alternative but to say that the proposals in their present form are unacceptable to them for reasons given below:

(1) The Mussalmans, after twenty-five years of genuine efforts for the reconciliation of the two major communities and the bitter experience of the failure of such efforts, are convinced that it is neither just nor possible, in the interest of peace and happiness of the two peoples, to compel them to constitute one Indian Union, composed of the two principal nations—Hindus and Muslims—which appears to be the main object of His Majesty's Government, as adumberated in the preamble of the Draft Declaration, the creation of more than one Union being relegated only to the realm of remote possibility and is purely illusory.

(2) In the Draft Declaration a constitution-making body has been proposed with the primary object of creating one Indian Union. So far as the Muslim League is concerned, it has finally decided that the only solution of India's constitutional problem is the partition of India into independent zones, and it will, therefore, be unfair to the Mussalmans to compel them to enter such a constitution-making body, whose main object is the creation of a new Indian Union. With conditions as they are, it will be not only futile but on the contrary may exacerbate bitterness and animosity amongst the various elements in the country.

Besides, the machinery which has been proposed for the creation of the constitution-making body, namely, that it will consist of members elected by the newly elected Lower Houses of the eleven provinces, upon the cessation of hostilities, as a single Electoral College by the system of proportional representation, is a fundamental departure from the right of the Musal-

mans, hitherto enjoyed by them, to elect their representatives by means of separate electorates, which is the only sure way in which true representatives of the Musalmans can be chosen.

The constitution-making body will take decisions by a bare majority on all questions of most vital and paramount character involved in the framing of the constitution, which is a departure from the fundamental principles of justice and contrary to constitutional practice so far followed in the various countries and Dominions; and the Musalmans, by agreeing to this will, instead of exercising their right and judgment as a constituent factor, be at the entire mercy of the constitution-making body, in which they will be a minority of about twenty-five per cent.

(3) The right of non-accession to the Union, as contemplated in the Draft Declaration, has been conceded, presumably, in response to the insistent demands by the Musalmans for the partition of India, but the method and procedure laid down are such as to negative the professed object, for, in the Draft Proposals, the right of non-accession has been given to the existing provinces, which have been formed from time to time for administrative convenience and on no logical basis.

The Musalmans cannot be satisfied by such a declaration on a vital question affecting their future destiny and demand a clear and precise pronouncement on the subject. Any attempt to solve the future problem of India by the process of evading the real issues is to court disaster.

In the Draft Proposals no procedure has been laid down as to how the verdict of the province is to be obtained in favour of or against accession to the one Union; but in the letter, dated the 2nd of April from the Secretary of Sir Stafford Cripps, addressed to the President of the All-India Muslim

League, it is stated that "a province should reach the decision whether or not to stand out of the Union by a vote in the Legislative Assembly on a resolution to stand in. If the majority for accession to the Union is less than sixty per cent, the minority will have the right to demand a plebiscite of the adult male population." In this connection it must be emphasized that in the provinces where the Musalmans are in a majority, as in the case of the major provinces of Bengal and the Punjab, they are in a minority in the Legislative Assemblies; and in the Assemblies of Sind and the North-West Frontier Provinces, the total number, namely, sixty and fifty, respectively, is so small and the weightage given to the non-Muslims so heavy that it can be easily manipulated and a decision under such conditions cannot be the true criterion of ascertaining the real opinion of the Musalmans of those provinces.

As regards the suggested plebiscite in the provinces in which the Musalmans are in a majority, in the event of the requisite majority not being available in the Legislative Assemblies, the procedure laid down is that reference shall be made to the whole adult population of the provinces and not to the Musalmans alone, which is to deny them the inherent right to self-determination.

(4) With regard to the Indian States, it is the considered opinion of the Committee that it is a matter for them to decide whether to join or not to join or form a Union.

(5) With regard to the treaties to be negotiated between the Crown and the Indian Union or Unions, the proposals do not indicate as to what would happen in case of disagreement on the terms between the contracting parties, nor is there any provision made as to what would be the procedure when there is a difference of

opinion in negotiating a revision of treaty arrangements with the Indian States in the new situation.

(6) With regard to the interim arrangement, there is no definite proposal except the bare statement that His Majesty's Government desire and invite the effective and immediate participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the counsels of their country, of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations. The Committee are, therefore, unable to express their opinion until a complete picture is available. Another reason why the Committee are unable to express their opinion on the interim arrangements for participation in the counsels of the country, is that Sir Stafford Cripps has made it clear that the scheme goes through as a whole or is rejected as a whole and that it would not be possible to retain only the part relating to the immediate arrangements at the centre and discard the rest of the Draft Scheme, and as the Committee has come to the conclusion that the proposals for the future are unacceptable, it will serve no useful purpose to deal further with the question of the immediate arrangements.

In conclusion the Committee wish to point out that the position of he Muslim League has been and is that unless the principle of Pakistan scheme, as embodied in the Lahore Resolution, dated March 1940, which is now the creed of the All-India Muslim League, . . . is unequivocally accepted and the right of the Musalmans to self-determination is conceded by means of a machinery which will reflect the true verdict of Muslim India, it is not possible for the Muslim League to accept any proposal or scheme regarding the future.

The "Quit India" Movement

With a Japanese invasion, under Bose, almost a

certainty, and expecting little gain in a compromise with the Muslims or the British, and, moreover, being extremely annoyed over the "insolent" attitude of the British in recognizing the Muslim League's viewpoint, the Congress leaders prepared for an all-out attack against the Government so as to teach the British a lesson. Doubtful of an allied victory in the war, Gandhiji was now becoming more and more hostile to the British. Maulana Azad explains this in the following words:

> Gandhiji was by now inclined more and more to the view that the Allies could not win the war. He feared that it might end in the triumph of Germany and Japan, or that at the best there might be a stalemate.
>
> Gandhiji did not express this opinion about the outcome of the war in clear-cut terms but in discussions with him I felt that he was becoming more and more doubtful about the Allied victory. I also saw that Subhas Bose's escape to Germany had made a great impression on Gandhiji. He had not formerly approved many of Bose's actions, but now I found a change in his outlook. Many of his remarks convinced me that he admired the courage and resourcefulness Subhas Bose had displayed in making his escape from India. His admiration for Subhas Bose unconsciously coloured his view about the whole war situation.[1]

The Maulana visited Gandhiji at Wardha in June 1942 and he found that "he had moved far away from the position he had taken at the outbreak of War".[2] The Maulana also reports that Gandhiji told him "in unqualified terms that if Japanese army ever came into India, it would come not as our enemies, but as

1 *Ibid.*, p. 41. 2 *Ibid.*, p. 72.

united will and strength behind it.

In somewhat guarded tones Maulana Azad admits that this resolution was meant to be a bargaining counter. The Working Committee waited for the reactions of the Government. The Maulana has disclosed that most of the followers of Gandhiji, including members of the Working Committee, expected that the move would demoralise the Government and "force it to come to terms".[1]

Expecting that the Government might accept the demand "or at least would show a conciliatory attitude."[2] Gandhiji chose Miss Slade, a British disciple of his, known as Mira Ben, who was for a long time staying in Gandhi Ashram, to be his emissary to the Viceroy. But she failed to get an interview with him:

> This refusal of the Viceroy even to receive Mira Ben made Gandhiji realize that the Government would not easily yield. The confidence he had in this regard was shaken, but he still clung to the belief that the Government would not take any drastic action.[3]

The Hindu masses were expecting some miracle to happen. The Congress Resolution had electrified the atmosphere. Gandhiji no longer feared any danger from the Punjabis or the Gurkhas, as he did in the beginning of War. The reason was obvious. Bose, a Hindu leader, who was a staunch advocate of Party dictatorship and majority rule in India, was coming, with the aid of the Japanese armies, to protect the Hindus against all such elements. The Hindu masses generally believed that the Congress offensive would synchronise with Japan's entry into India. Gandhi had given a very queer interpretation to his non-violence theory in relation to the coming campaign. No volun-

1 *India Wins Freedom*, p. 80. 2 *Ibid.*, p. 81. 3 *Ibid.*, p. 82.

teer or member of Congress was to court arrest. The orders were that he must resist unless he was physically overpowered. But, again, there were overtures for peace. If the British could hand over control of India to the Congress the eventuality would not arise.

The Congress historian records

> Whether the main action that has been visualised in the operative clause of the Resolution (of July 14) is destined to come into being depends largely upon England's own wisdom and foresight. It is up to Britain to avoid this complication at a critical stage in Britain's history as well as India's and it is up to Britain's allies, whom India cannot, of course, directly address in the matter, to intercede and do their best to ensure their own victory by engaging the millions of India and her untold resources on the side of United Nations.[1]

This summed up, in a nutshell, the official position of the Congress. The *History* records many events, which show that the Congress high command had pinned great hopes in Roosevelt and Chiang Kai-Shek. Louis Fischer in his *A Week with Gandhi* writes:

> Nehru was now in complete agreement with Gandhi about the coming campaign. He had hesitated to follow Gandhi, because he had hoped that President Roosevelt, or Chiang Kai-Shek or somebody else would intervene in the Indian situation, break the Anglo-Indian deadlock and make organized opposition to the British.

Two American writers and correspondents, Mr. Louis Fischer and Mr. Edgar Snow, had very close and long company with Gandhiji and other Congress leaders and both were in sympathy with their aspirations. Both sent articles in support of the Con-

1 Sitaramayya, Vol. II, p. 342

month. Gandhiji had by that time realised his second Himalayan blunder. It was a gambler's throw, and he had lost.

On September 10, 1942, the British Prime Minister, Mr. Churchill, spoke on the Indian situation in the House of Commons. His speech was the last nail in the coffin of the Congress agitation. He said:

> The course in India has been improving and is on the whole re-assuring. The broad principles of the declaration made by the British Government which formed the basis of the mission of the Lord Privy Seal, Sir Stafford Cripps, to India must be taken as representing the settled policy of the British Crown and Parliament. These principles stand in their full scope and integrity. No one can add to them and no one can take anything away.
>
> The good offices of Sir Stafford Cripps were rejected by the Indian Congress Party. This, however, does not end the matter. The Indian Congress Party does not represent all India. It does not even represent the Hindus masses. It is a political organization built around party machine and sustained by certain manufacturing and financial interest!
>
> Outside that Party and fundamentally opposed to it are 90 million Muslims in British India who have their rights of self-expression; 50 million Depressed Classes, or untouchables as they are supposed to defile their Hindu co-religionists by their presence or by their shadow; and 95 million subjects of the Princes of India with whom we are bound by treaty; in all these are 235 millions in all India. This takes no account of the large elements among the Hindus, Sikhs and Christians in British India who deplore the present policy of the Congress Party.
>
> It is necessary that these main facts should

> not be overlooked here or abroad because no appreciation of the Indian problem or of the relations between India and Britain is possible without the recognition of these basic data. . . .

The Muslim League Working Committee, meeting in Bombay on August 20, 1942, passed a resolution, which summed up the political situation remarkably well. It said:

> The Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League, having given their deep and anxious consideration to the present political development in the country, deplore the decision arrived at by the All-India Congress Committee on August 8 to launch an 'open rebellion' by resorting to mass civil disobedience in pursuance of their objective of establishing a Congress-Hindu domination in India, which resulted in lawlessness and considerable destruction of life and property.
>
> It is considered opinion of the Working Committee that this movement is directed not only to coerce the British Government, into handing over power to a Hindu oligarchy, and thus disabling themselves from carrying out their moral obligations and pledges given to the Mussalmans and other sections of the people of India from time to time, but also to force the Mussalmans to submit and surrender to the Congress terms and dictation.
>
> Ever since the beginning of the war, and even prior to that, the sole objective of the Congress policy had been either to cajole or coerce the British Government into surrendering power to the Congress—a Hindu body with a microscopic following of other communities—in utter suppression of the 100 millions of Mussalmans, besides millions of other peoples of this vast subcontinent of India.

While claiming the right of self-determination for India which is a mere Congress euphemism for Hindu majority, it persistently opposed the right of self-determination for the Muslim nation to decide and determine their own destiny. On May 1, 1942, the All-India Congress Committee, by a resolution, emphatically repudiated the Muslim League demand for the right of self-determination for the Muslims, and thus closed the door for the settlement of the communal problem, which is a condition precedent to the attainment of freedom and independence of India.

The Congress also recognised this as an indispensable condition, and had, therefore, made it a prominent plank in the Congress programme for over 20 years, but by their recent decisions, have suddenly thrown it overboard and in its stead, substituted a fantastic theory that the solution of the Hindu-Muslim problem can only follow the withdrawal of British power from India.

The negotiations of Sir Stafford Cripps with the Congress broke down not on the issue of independence but because of the refusal of the British Government to hand over the Muslims and the minorities to the tender mercies of the Congress. Any acquiescence in this on the part of the British would have been strenuously resisted by the minorities, and particularly, by the Muslim nation with the memories of tyranny in the Congress-governed provinces still fresh and vivid in their minds.

Baulked in their effort to cajole Sir Stafford Cripps to agree to transfer power to the Congress caucus, they decided upon the slogan of 'Quit India', accompanied by the threat of mass civil disobedience. This slogan is a mere camouflage and what is really aimed at is the supreme control of the Government of the country by the Congress.

The Mussalmans are not a whit less insistent on the freedom for the country and the achievement of independence to the people of India, which is the creed of the All-India Muslim League. They are, however, firmly convinced that the present Congress movement is not directed for securing independence for all the constituent elements of the life in the country but for the establishment of a Hindu *raj* and deal a death blow to the Muslim goal of Pakistan.

The Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League note with dissatisfaction the attitude and policy of the British Government towards the national aspirations of 100 millions of Muslims of India. While the Congress aims at ignoring and suppressing the Muslim demand, the Working Committee regret that the British Government have been unresponsive to the Muslim League offer of co-operation. Appeasement of the Congress has been the central pivot in Government policy with barren and sterile results, and has now culminated in the open defiance of law and order. Since the commencement of hostilities, the Muslim League has been ready and willing, either singly or in co-operation with other parties, to shoulder the responsibility for running the administration and mobilising the resources of the country for the war effort, for the defence of India if a real share of power and authority of the Government at the centre and in the provinces is conceded within the framework of the present constitution and, in pursuance of this policy, the Muslim League accepted the underlying principle of the August offer of 1940 of the British Government.

But Government, in supplementing the offer, nullified the essential principles of it and so made it impossible for the Muslim League to co-operate with the Government on honourable terms. In

spite of the fact that the British Government spurned the offer of co-operation of the Muslim League, still, under the imminent shadow of the Japanese menace, the Muslim League once again reiterated their offer by their resolution of December 27, 1941, in the following words: "In view of the fact that the entry of Japan in the war on the side of Axis Powers has brought danger much closer to India and forced into greater prominence the question of the defence of India, the Working Committee consider it necessary to reiterate that the Muslim League from the very beginning expressed its willingness to share responsibility of the defence of the country as is evident from the stand taken by the President of the All-India Muslim League as far back as November 1939. The Working Committee once again declare that they are ready and willing as before to shoulder the burden of the defence of the country, singly or in co-operation with other parties, on the basis of a real share and responsibility given in the authority of Government at the Centre and the Provinces within the framework of the present constitution but without prejudice to the major political issues involved in framing the future constitution".

But the British Government completely ignored the offer of the Muslim League. While the proposals of Sir Stafford Cripps virtually conceded the Congress demands, the right of secession from the British Commonwealth of Nations and forming a Constituent Assembly with a preponderantly Hindu majority for framing the post-war constitution, they merely recognized the possibility of establishing Pakistan supposed to be implicit in the non-accession scheme.

The Muslim League Council met on November 9, 1942, to consider the political situation. Addressing the

Council, the Quaid-i-Azam made a brilliant exposition of the Muslim case in the following words:

> India never was one, never was a nation, never was a country governed by one single power even with the sword. It is a sub-continent of different nationalities and peoples. It was never governed, in history, by one single power. Even to-day, when constitutionally and legally Britain is ruling over India, one-third is not British. This administrative oneness is entirely the making of the British. The government which has been in this sub-continent for 150 or 160 years is not a government with the sanction of the peoples.
>
> It is a democratic system imposed on the Moghal system. Its sanction is the British bayonets, and not the sanction of the peoples. There has been aroused a great political consciousness among the people and we want our freedom. . . . Our proposal of Pakistan presupposes the freedom and independence of India. . . .
>
> . . . We say: Have your freedom and independence in your zones. Let us have our rule in our regions. It seems that Hindu leadership thinks, 'We have three-fourths in our pocket. Let us see if we can diddle them out of the remaining one-fourth.' That is the spirit, that is the manoeuvre under the garb of the various proposals that we have seen hitherto.
>
> It all comes round to this: 'National' Government. Whose 'National' Government? Hindu National Government! Another is majority government responsible to the legislature. These are fine phrases of the day. It comes to this that Musalmans as a minority must submit and surrender to Hindu *raj*. That is a position that Musalmans will never accept.[1]

The British Government was hardly straight and

1 *Statesman*, November 10, 1942.

honest in its attitude towards the Indian political parties and did not want to part with power. Ever since the "Quit India" Movement, the powerful Labour opposition, supported by the British Press, had been pressing for a reconciliation with the Congress. The Conservative Government was opposed to the Congress, but did not support the League either, in its demand for Pakistan. The Churchill Cabinet was keen to maintain the so-called unity of India at all costs. In a united India, of course, they had every desire to help the minorities. In January, 1943, the British Secretary of State, Mr. Amery, talked of the role of Akbar, the Moghal Emperor, who is considered by British historians as the symbol of Indian unity and nationalism. About the same time, Lord Linlithgow, addressing the Associated Chamber of Commerce at Calcutta, emphasized the geographical unity of India. This was a calculated attempt to placate the Hindus and appease the Congress.

On January 1, 1943, the Hindu Mahasabha held its annual session at Cawnpore and passed a resolution almost on the same lines as the Congress did at the beginning of the War. It may be mentioned here that Dr. Shyama Prashad Mukherjee, a prominent Hindu Mahasabha leader and Finance Minister in the Bengal Cabinet, resigned on November 16, 1942, as a mark of protest against the British policy of suppressing the "Quit India" Movement. Thus the Hindus of all viewpoints, in the absence of the Congress leaders (then in jail) had formed a united front against the Muslim League.

On January 24, 1943, the Quaid-i-Azam addressed the Muslim Students' Federation at Bombay, wherein he replied to the speeches of Mr. Amery and Lord

Linlithgow in the following words:

> Mr. Amery has made a discovery of a historical nature and has been studying the pattern of Akbar's government for the post-war reconstruction of India. The British Government in India, too, is constituted like Akbar's government. Akbar had Hindu ministers and Muslim ministers. Akbar knew he had to rule over both. He was eminently concerned with his own autocratic rule . . . He nominated his own ministers from different nationalities for civil and military administration. The Hindus were never reconciled to his rule and when there was trouble either with Hindus or Muslims, Akbar did his job either through his Hindu or Muslim ministers. That is the system of government which is sought to be perpetuated in this country. United India means that so far as the people are concerned they have no voice and it is the rulers who will rule by manoeuvring. It is that system which the British Government in India is following and desires to continue.
>
> The present Executive Council of the Viceroy is on the same pattern as that of Akbar's. There are Muslims, Hindus, Parsis and the Sikhs, all nominated by the Viceroy to do his job.[1]

Then in the same speech he commented on the homily preached by the Viceroy in these words:

> While Mr. Amery was engaged in the research of Indian history and preached united India, we find that the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow, has suddenly discovered almost seven years after his stay here that India is geographically one. What does this indicate to any intelligent man? The Hindu Mahasabha by its Akhand Hindustan resolution which it adopted at Cawnpore has made a New Year present to the British diehards.[2]

In April, 1943, was held the thirtieth annual

1 *The Indian Annual Register*, 1943, Vol. I. p. 275. 2 *Ibid.*

session of the All-India Muslim League, at Delhi. In his Presidential Address, Jinnah accused the Congress of obduracy and intransigence against the Muslims, and the British of imperialistic designs. He extended support to the Congress in winning freedom and to the British in winning the War, provided both of them reciprocated in the same spirit of sincerity by agreeing to the Pakistan demand.

To the British he said:

> The British said: "In resisting the Congress we are really protecting you and safeguarding your interests, because if we were to surrender to the demands of the Congress it would be at your risk and sacrifice." But the Musalmans say: "We don't believe that you love us so much." We know it suits them and they are taking the fullest advantage of the situation, because if there is any agreement between Hindus and Muslims then they know the net result of that would be parting with power. They say they are too anxious to part with power but we do not agree in uniting. If we cannot secure power as a united India then let us take it as divided India. The British policy in this sub-continent has been for nearly 100 years based on their conviction that the Muslims and Hindus will never agree and if by some means or other they enter into an agreement by their influence or pressure then it will be nothing but a cockpit of feud beneath the umbrella of United India with the Englishman on the top. Therefore the Britisher, with his farsighted vision, has followed a policy and taken us on this line of united democratic India—I don't think they have given it up yet—the line of united India and democratic parliamentary system of government. The Britishers know that if we are kept on that line and are allowed to frame a constitution as a democratically united India we would never come to

an agreement without their arbitration; it is the only way to prolong their lease of supremacy. When you have quarrelled and broken each other's heads then the monkey will come in to do justice between two cats. . . .

To the Hindus and their leaders he said:

> I say to Hindus—and the Britishers know it better than anybody else—that the quickest way for the freedom of the peoples, both Hindus and Muslims, is Pakistan. It may come in my life-time or not . . . but you will remember these words of mine. . .
>
> I say this with a clear conscience. My profound regret is that it is the Congress and its Hindu leadership that are holding up the achievement of freedom of both the Hindus and the Musalmans. Our conscience is clear. I appeal to the Hindu public and Hindu leaders: Review, revise your policy.
>
> Nobody would welcome it more than myself if Mr. Gandhi is even now really willing to come to a settlement with the Muslim League on the basis of Pakistan. . . If he has made up his mind, what is there to prevent Mr. Gandhi from writing direct to me? He is writing letters to the Viceroy. Why does he not write to me direct? Who is there that can prevent him from doing so?. . .
>
> . . . But I do not see evidence of any kind of change of policy on the part of Mr. Gandhi or Congress or the Hindu leadership.

The resolution, moved by Chaudhry Khaliquzzaman, expressed concern and grave apprehension at the failure of the British Government to make an explicit declaration asked for in the resolution passed by the Working Committee of All-India Muslim League in Bombay on August 20, 1952. It also

warned "the British Government in all earnestness that the imposition of . . . a federal constitution will be resisted by Muslim India with all its might, which will inevitably result in strife, bloodshed and misery, the responsibility for which will rest on the British Government alone". Moreover, it asked the British to make an explicit declaration regarding transfer of power on the basis of Pakistan.

However, there was no response either from the British or from the Congress. Mr. Gandhi did write a letter from the Aga Khan's palace, where he was detained, to Mr. Jinnah, but not the letter, which he had requested for. Without indicating any change of heart in favour of the Muslim demand he wrote to Jinnah asking for a meeting. The Government of India did not deliver the letter to him but issued a communication of their own on May 24, 1943, informing the people of the desire of Mahatma Gandhi and their own attitude: It said:

> The Government of India have received a request from Mr. Gandhi to forward a short letter from himself to Mr. Jinnah expressing a wish to meet him. In accordance with their known policy in regard to correspondence or interviews with Mr. Gandhi, the Government of India have decided that this letter cannot be forwarded and have so informed Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah. They are not prepared to give facilities for political correspondence or contact to a person detained for promoting an illegal mass movement which he has not disavowed and thus gravely embarrassing India's war effort at a critical time.
>
> It rests with Mr. Gandhi to satisfy the Government of India that he can safely be allowed once more to participate in the public affairs of the country and until he does so the

disabilities from which he suffers are of his own choice.

It was really a strategic move on the part of Mahatma Gandhi. Mr. Jinnah invited him to write to him, and he had challenged that the British Government could not have the courage to stop such a letter. When the letter was actually stopped the whole Hindu press was agog with all kinds of speculations and demanded action from him against the Government. Since the contents of the letter were not released the confusion was worse confounded. But Mr. Jinnah saw through the game. He had not asked for just a love-letter or a letter of invitation to meet. He begged for a revision of policy, for a change of heart, for an acceptance in clear terms of the Muslim demand for self-determination.

Consequently, in a public statement on May 28, 1943, he expressed his disagreement and disapproval of the sterile move of Mahatma Gandhi, and said:

> The letter of Mr. Gandhi can only be construed as a move on his part to embroil the Muslim League to come into clash with the British Government solely for the purpose of helping his release, so that he would be free to do what he pleases thereafter. There is really no change of policy on the part of Mr. Gandhi and no genuine desire to meet the suggestions that I made in my speech during the League Session at Delhi.

The Hindu press did not accept the position. Mr. Jinnah was accused of showing weakness and of going back on his publicly pledged words. But the truth was unravelled when Mahatma Gandhi, on his release in 1944, himself released the letter which he had written from jail. The mystery was solved and Jinnah's position was abundantly fortified. For,

therein, he had said:

> When sometime after my incarceration, Government asked me for a list of newspapers I would like to have, I included *Dawn* in my list. I have been receiving it with more or less regularity. Whenever it comes to me I read it carefully. I have followed the proceedings of the League, as reported in the *Dawn* columns. I noted your invitation to me to write to you. Hence this letter. I welcome your invitation, I suggest our meeting face to face rather than talking through correspondence. But I am in your hands. I hope this letter will be sent to you and, if you agree to my proposal, that the Government will let you visit me. One thing I had better mention. There seems to be an 'if' about your invitation. Do you say I should write only if I have changed my heart? God alone knows men's hearts. I would like you to take me as I am. Why should not both you and I approach the great question of communal unity as men determined on finding a common solution, and work together to make our solution acceptable to all who are concerned with it or are interested in it?[1]

The thirty-first session of the All-India Muslim League was held at Karachi during Christmas. The Quaid-i-Azam in his usual style addressed an enthusiastic crowd of about 1½ lakhs of Muslims. He said:

> Can we Musalmans of India accept Akhand Hindustan, Hindu *raj* over entire sub-continent? Is it possible to expect Muslim India to agree to Akhand Hindustan and Hindu *raj* on the continent? This is their proposal. They have not given up their dream. On the other hand, they talk of independence. Whose independence? I have repeatedly warned you that when they talk of independence, they mean the independence of

1 *India-Pakistan Year Book*, 1948, p. 928.

Hindu India and slavery of Muslim India. Can you achieve Pakistan without independence of India? When we say Pakistan, we mean not our independence only but independence of Hindus also. If the Hindus, owing to their obsession or dream or cussedness put obstruction in the way of the freedom of both and insist upon the freedom of one and the slavery of the other, I ask you who are responsible for holding up the progress of the country except the Hindus? . . .

Mahatma Gandhi changes his War Policy

Soon after the arrest of Congress leaders, Gandhiji realised that his shot had misfired. Unless the "Quit India" Movement was followed by a Japanese attack, there was hardly any chance of its success. The Mahatma was not prepared for this eventuality. He thought that before the Japanese armies would enter India he would use his loaded pistol against the government to intimidate them. Unless his attack could coincide with a Japanese invasion he had no plans to strike. The government was also watching the Congress strategy and to forestal any synchronization of the two events, it struck first, taking Gandhiji by surprise. The Congress leadership was caught in a whirlpool. Mahatma Gandhi started complaining to the Viceroy that by arresting the Congress leaders before time the government had created a violent situation in the country. On August 14, 1942, he wrote to Lord Linlithgow that "the Government of India were wrong in precipitating the crisis". He thought that they should have waited at least till he had actually launched his mass action. He requested the Viceroy to reconsider the policy. The Viceroy, however, rejected his plea. While trying to convince the Viceroy of his innocence, Mahatmaji completely ignored or

forgot his earlier statements, articles and confidential circulars of the Congress offices, in which the *mantra* of "Do or Die" was preached, and wherein the struggle was referred to as "a fight to the finish in the course of which Gandhiji would not hesitate to run any risk however great."[1] He repudiated with full force "all responsibility of the consequences that flowed from the 'Quit India' Movement". He sent a "very personal letter" to the Viceroy on December 31, 1942, giving a catalogue of statements made against him containing "palpable departures from truth". In that letter he dwelt on what he called, "the law of Satyagraha," which prescribed a "remedy of crucifying the flesh by fasting". He sent yet another letter on January 19 and then on January 29, 1943.

Having failed to convince the Viceroy and secure his terms from the Government of India, Gandhiji resorted to his last familiar weapon of coercion. He informed the Government of India finally on February 8, 1943, that he would undertake a three weeks' capacity fast. Two days later, he started the fast. The attention of the whole world was once again focussed on him. In January, 1943, the U. S. President, Mr. Roosevelt, had requested Mahatmaji, through a special communication, to co-operate with the Allies in the war effort. The letter was never delivered to him but the news seemed to have greatly encouraged him. The whole Hindu press now started a campaign for the release of Gandhiji. The Hindu members of the Viceroy's Executive Council, Mr. M. S. Aney, N. R. Sarkar, and Sir H. P. Mody, resigned their membership only to bring pressure on the Government of India. Almost all the Hindu political parties, functioning

1 *The Indian Annual Register*, 1943, Vol. I, p. 319.

with a common objective under different names (the Hindu Mahasabha, the All-Parties Leaders' Conference and the Akali Conference) clamoured for Gandhiji's release. The Government, however, made no move and ultimately the Mahatma broke his fast on March 3, 1943.

This move, however, gave one definite advantage to the Congress, in that foreigners, especially President Roosevelt, started taking a direct and active interest in Indian affairs. Their sympathies were apparently with the Congress. Mr. Roosevelt made it a point at his meeting with Mr. Churchill in May, 1943, at Washington to press for the acceptance of the Congress viewpoint on the question of freedom of India after the the War.[1]

Indeed, for some time past the American Government had been pressing very hard for an immediate solution of the Indian problem. The Pearl Harbour tragedy had considerably unnerved the Allies. The Cripps' proposals were the direct result of American pressure. President Roosevelt had sent at that time his personal envoy, designated as special Ambassador, Colonel Johnson, to make an on-the-spot study of the political situation in India. Colonel Johnson was a very great admirer of Jawaharlal Nehru, whom he regarded as "one of the biggest personalities of the world".[2] Johnson left India in April, 1942. In November, 1942, another personal envoy of Mr. Roosevelt, Mr. Philips, came to India and stayed there for six months. He personally met Mr. Churchill at Washington and appealed for an alliance with the Congress. In a letter, dated May 14, 1943, he informed the President of his personal reactions to the situation in India. About

1 The *Indian Annual Register*, 1944, Vol. II, p. 272. 2 *Ibid.*

Gandhi, he wrote in that letter: "Mr. Gandhi's followers regard him as semi-divine and worship him. Millions who are not his followers look upon him as the foremost Indian of the day".[1]

He went to the extent of suggesting the transfer of power by a certain date to Indians and proposed a high level, internationally controlled conference under the chairmanship of an American nominee of Mr. Roosevelt, with the nominees of Russia and China, participating. The conference was to be sponsored jointly by the President and the King-Emperor of England.

Mr. Churchill, however, gave a cold shoulder to all such proposals and politely asked the American leaders to mind their own business. Mr. Philips and Colonel Johnson were never heard of. The British Government took a serious view of the press statements and letters of the envoys and a bitter controvery raged for some time over the question.

On October 20, 1943, Lord Linlithgow relinquished the charge of his office and Lord Wavell was sworn in as the new Viceroy. Mahatmaji continued writing about the responsibility of the 1942-43 disturbances to various officers of the Government of India, including the additional Secretary of Government of India, Mr. R. Tottenhem, and Sir Reginal Maxwell. He also wrote to Sir Samul Hoare. To Lord Wavell he wrote the first letter on February 17, 1944, after having received a formal notice from the Government giving causes of his detention and conferring on him the right of representation against detention. In this letter Gandhiji addressed Lord Wavell as 'Dear friend' and

1 *Ibid.*, p. 277.

made the claim that he was a friend of the British. He explained that he and the Congress leaders were wholly innocent of the charges against them, and that the "Quit India" resolution had not the sinister or poisonous meaning attributed to it. He wrote that "the expression is charged with the friendliest feelings for Britain in terms of the whole humanity".

In his second letter of March 9, 1944, he gave an indication of shifting his position. Lord Wavell had made a speech in the Legislative Assembly on February 17, 1944, wherein he had called upon the Congress to abandon non-co-operation, by withdrawing the August Resolution. Mahatma Gandhi no longer emphasized his innocence, nor did he turn down the suggestion straight away. He, on the other hand, showed his willingness to reconsider the question in consultation with the members of the Congress Working Committee. He wrote that "a resolution, arrived at jointly" could not be "a matter of individual conscience". He added:

> Individual conscience may come into play after this necessary step, not before. Is a prisoner ever free to exercise his conscience?. . . . Does it become an all-powerful government to be afraid of the consequences of releasing unarmed men and women pledged to non-violence? Moreover, why should you hesitate to put me in touch with the Working Committee members so as to enable me to know their views and reactions?[1]

The Viceroy refused to hold the Congress guiltless and insisted on its abandoning non-co-operation. He also thought it "unprofitable to enter into lengthy arguments".

1 *Ibid.*, p. 203.

In April, Mahatma Gandhi's health suddenly deteriorated, causing anxiety, and on medical advice the Government of India released him on May 6, 1944.

On June 17, 1944, Mr. Gandhi again wrote to the Viceroy, seeking permission to see the Members of the Working Committee. The Viceroy, however, pointed out in his letter of June 22, 1944, that since he still adhered to the August 1942 resolution, he would not regard this as a "reasonable or practical policy for the immediate future".[1]

He, however, wrote:

> If after your convalescence and on further reflection you have a definite and constructive policy to propose for the furtherance of India's welfare, I shall be glad to consider it.[2]

Gelder-Gandhi Interview

Gandhiji now had no hope left of a compromise. There seemed to be no other course open to him than to reverse his earlier attitude and policy towards the War. Through the efforts of mutual friends an interview was arranged, as a face-saving device, between Gandhiji and the representative of the *News Chronicle*, London, Mr. Stuart Gelder, on July 11, 1944. In this interview Mahatmaji promised in unmistakable terms to co-operate with the war effort, give up his creed of non-violence and send the Congress nominees to the interim Government of India to step up the war activities on the national level. The pronouncements of Mahatma Gandhi were so far reaching, so radically different in policy and creed from his previous position that even the biggest admirer of Congress was confounded and flabbergasted. An agreed version of the views of both Mahatmaji and Mr. Gelder was prepared

1 *Statesman*, June 23, 1944. 2 *Ibid.*

to preclude any possibility of subsequent repudiation or misrepresentation, to be presented to the Viceroy. The public version was slightly brief and vague. But it so happened that Mr. Gelder published the version meant for the Viceroy. Relevent portions of the report prepared verbatim by Mr. Gelder and approved by Gandhiji in the actual form of dialogue that took place between them is as follows:

> I saw Mahatma Gandhi on July 11 at Panchgani. I told him: "My Editor is anxious to help in solving the political deadlock in India.
>
> "I went to Delhi and I was disappointed. I hope you will not disappoint me". I asked him, "supposing you saw Lord Wavell, how would you begin the talk? What would you say to him?"
>
> He promptly replied that he would tell the Viceroy that he had sought the interview with a view to helping and not hindering the Allies, and it was to this end he had asked for permission to see the members of the Congress Working Committee. He said he felt he had no authority to act in the name of the Congress. According to the canons of Satyagraha, when a civil resister was imprisoned, the authority vested in him automatically came to an end. Hence the need for him to see the members of the Working Committee.
>
> I said: "The Viceroy might feel, as you swear by the August resolution and by the weapon of civil disobedience, your meeting the Working Committee members may only result in their re-investing you with authority to carry on civil disobedience in the name of Congress and the result will be that when you came out of the interview, you will hold the pistol at the Viceroy's head and say, 'Do this or I start civil disobedience'. That would make things worse than they are to-day".

Gandhi replied: "At the back of that is utter distrust of my profession that I am and have always been a friend of the British. Therefore, I can never use the weapon of civil disobedience during the war unless there was a very grave reason, as for instance, the thwarting of India's natural rights to freedom".

My next question was: "Supposing the Working Committee was let out of jail to-morrow and the Government refuses to give India what they want, would you start civil disobedience?

Gandhi replied: "If the Working Committee came out, they would take stock of the situation and discuss things among themselves and with me. I can tell you this, that I have no intention of offering civil disobedience to-day. I cannot take the country back to 1942. History can never be repeated. Even without the authority of the Congress, if I wanted to do it, I could start civil disobedience to-day on the strength of my supposed influence with the masses. But I would be doing so merely to embarrass the British Government. This cannot be my object. But the Working Committee would not sit still while the people are suffering. It is my conviction that we cannot improve the food situation and alleviate the sufferings of the people unless power and responsibility are transferred from British into Indian hands. Without such transfer the attempt of Congressmen and others to alleviate the people's sufferings are most likely to lead to conflict with the Government.

I interrupted and said: "With things as they are, I cannot believe that they will transfer authority now. This Government will not concede the demand for Independence while the war is on."

Gandhi replied that there was a difference between what he would ask to-day and what was asked in 1942. To-day he would be satisfied with

a National Government in full control of civil administration. It was not so in 1942. Such a Government would be composed of persons chosen by the elected members of the Central Assembly. "This would mean, declaration of the Independence of India, qualified as above, during the war".

I thought it was a great improvement on the 1942 position. I asked him if the military would control the railways and ports, etc. Gandhi replied that the National Government would let the military have all the facilities that the military might require. But the control would be that of the National Government. Ordinance rule would give place to normal administration by the National Government.[1]

Why the Somersault?

So, the Mahatma performed a somersault, openly, publicly, unabashedly. But the question is: Why? He was never tired of preaching hatred and non-co-operation against all kinds of war—even in self-defence. It was supposed to be his creed, his fundamental belief. In 1940-41 he had informed Maulana Azad, the Congress President, that the creed of non-violence was more important to him than even the question of freedom of India. Consequently, he had advised complete aloofness from the war effort, even if England gave independence to India. Most of his followers had threatened to resign from the Working Committee if the Congress co-operated with the Allies. But now he not only agreed to help the Allies in the War, though in a roundabout way, but also contented himself with merely Congress control in the civil administration. Formerly, in the Cripps' Proposals he would not brook

1 The *Indian Annual Register*, 1944, Vol. II, pp. 164-5.

control of the Commander-in-Chief over the army and now he was satisfied with a subordinate and secondary position for the Congress in the Government.

Maulana Azad has expressed surprise over this change of policy on the part of Gandhiji. His actual words were quoted in the previous chapter. But the fact is that there was no reason for surprise. Mahatmaji was a very selfless leader, entirely devoted to the cause of Hinduism. Nationalism and non-violence were points of strategy only to achieve his objective, namely Hindu ascendency in India. He would speak, not as a Hindu, but as an Indian, on behalf of the whole India because it would further the cause of Hinduism in the present context of the modern world. As recently as January 19, 1960, replying to a question at a Press Conference in Bangalore, about Rajgopalachari's statement that Gandhiji supported Indo-Pakistan joint defence, Jawaharlal Nehru said:

> He really did not know what Gandhi had approved of or what position then was as anything of that kind must have been considered long before partition took place, although partition was talked about even then.
>
> Gandhiji might have said or discussed before partition that we should have common defence or many other common things. We all discussed that. But after that there was no chance of saying it, because you remember that soon after partition there was the Pakistan invasion of Kashmir.
>
> This I knew from personal knowledge because we were all very much exercised about it, exercised for variety of reasons, as invasion had taken place. Any invasion would have disturbed and distressed us but in this case this was more so as military operation had to be taken and

> we had been talking so much of non-violence and all that.
>
> Suddenly we had to have military operations. I remember Gandhiji saying that in the circumstances, it was our duty to defend ourselves and defend Kashmir and that we could not leave Kashmir undefended.[1]

Pandit Jawaharlal and other Congress leaders felt 'exercised' over the issue because they had talked of 'non-violence' as their creed, while, in fact, it was only a strategy, which can change with the exigencies of the situation. So, the position was clear. Mahatmaji's calculations about the result of War, especially about a Japanese victory had failed. Japanese armies were withdrawing, and the German armies were almost in their death trap. His threat of a fast-unto-death had proved abortive, and his hopes of intervention by China and America had been in vain. The "Quit India" Movement had also failed to paralyse the Government. Gandhiji was, therefore, a vanquished general for all practical purposes, and retreat was the only strategy open to him.

As regards the right of Muslims, his attitude was just as truculent as before. He retraced his steps in relation to the British Government only to get control of the Indian administration, however limited in sphere and scope. He, therefore, spoke as an Indian and demanded a national government responsible to the legislature, with a permanent, irrevocable and hostile Hindu majority. He plainly told the press about it while explaining his interview with Gelder:

> The British Government do not want a just settlement of the Indian claim for independence

1 *Statesman*, January 20, 1960.

> which is overdue, and they are using Mr. Jinnah as a cloak for denying freedom to India. I gave my warning in the talk I gave to Mr. Stuart Gelder. It must be the duty of all fair-minded people to break the diabolical conspiracy to stifle India's aspirations.[1]

That the real fight of the Congress was directed against the demand for Pakistan, and not against the British imperialism, was proved conclusively by the following disclosure of Gandhiji made in reply to a question whether his proposal could be compared to the Cripps' Proposal:

> My proposal is wholly different.
>
> The Cripps' proposals were unacceptable to me for the simple reason that they contemplated almost permanent vivisection of India and would have created an effective barrier against the Indian independence.

Mahatma Gandhi formally sent his proposals for setting up a National Central Government to the Viceroy on July 27, 1944. The Viceroy, however, rejected them in his letter of August 15, 1944, on the ground that during the war no constitutional amendment was possible, which would facilitate the formation of a national government of Gandhiji's conception. He, however, made it clear that in case the leaders of Hindus, Muslims and other minorities could co-operate mutually in a transitional government under the existing constitution, progress could be made both in the matter of forming a transitional government and of framing an agreed constitution, if any. Mahatmaji, however, adhered to the position, which the Congress had taken in April 1942, during the negotiations over the Cripps' Proposals.

1 *Statesman*, July 14, 1944.

CHAPTER VII

POLITICAL PARLEYS—GENERAL ELECTIONS

THE first person who tried to break the deadlock between the Congress and League over the Pakistan issue was Mr. C. Rajgopalachari, the former Premier of Madras and one of the top leaders of the Congress. He openly deprecated the controversy and supported the Muslim demand by getting a formal resolution in support of Pakistan passed (April 23, 1942) by the Congress party in the Madras Legislative Assembly. Later, he moved a similar resolution at the A.-I. C. C. meeting at Allahabad (April 29—May 3), condemning "the doubtful advantage of maintaining a controversy, over the unity of India". The resolution, however, fell by 120 votes to 15. Instead, the meeting passed another resolution moved by Mr. Jagat Narain Lal saying that any proposal to

> disintegrate India by giving liberty to any component state or territorial unit to secede from Indian Union or federation will be highly detrimental to the best interests of the people of the different states and provinces and the country as a whole, and the Congress, therefore, cannot agree to any such proposal.[1]

1 *Pioneer*, May 4, 1942.

The All-India Hindu Mahasabha now entered the picture by appointing a special committee (August 30) to negotiate with the Muslim League over a political settlement. Dr. Shyama Prashad Mukerjee, a prominent Hindu Mahasabha leader (who subsequently became its President), and Raja Maheshwar Dayal, the General Secretary of the Sabha, had a meeting with Mr. Jinnah (September 12) and claimed to have obtained his agreement to the following formula:

(a) A commission shall be appointed to demarcate contiguous Muslim majority areas.

(b) Sovereign Muslim States would be formed if a plebiscite on the basis of adult sufferage was in favour of separation.

(c) No safeguards for Muslims of the minority province would be provided in case separation was decided upon.

(d) No demand for a corridor will be made.

(e) Government machinery would help in any voluntary transfer of population.

In return they claimed that Mr. Jinnah had promised to fight side by side with other parties for the freedom of India.

Rajaji took this formula to Mahamta Gandhi in the Aga Khan's palace during his capacity fast of 21 days. After the Mahatma had put the seal of his approval over it, it was formally communicated by Rajaji to Mr. Jinnah (April 8, 1944) with some modifications. The modified formula, known as the C. R. formula, is as follows:

> Basis for terms of settlement between the Indian National Congress and the All-India Muslim League to which Mahatma Gandhi and Mr. Jinnah agree and which they will endeavour

respectively to get the Congress and the League to approve.

(1) Subject to the terms set out below as regards the constitution for Free India, the Muslim League endorses the Indian demand for independence and will co-operate with the Congress in the formation of a provisional interim Government for the transitional period.

(2) After the termination of the war, a commission shall be appointed for demarcating contiguous districts in the north-west and east of India, wherein the plebiscite of all the inhabitants held on the basis of adult sufferage or other practicable franchise shall ultimately decide the issue of separation from Hindustan. If the majority decide in favour of forming a sovereign state separate from Hindustan, such decision shall be given effect to, without prejudice to the right of districts on the border to choose to join either State.

(3) It will be open to all parties to advocate their points of view before the plebiscite is held.

(4) In the event of separation, mutual agreements shall be entered into for safeguarding defence, commerce and communications and for other essential purposes.

(5) Any transfer of population shall only be on an absolutely voluntary basis.

(6) These terms shall be binding only in case of transfer by Britain of full power and responsibility for the goverance of India.

Mr. Jinnah promised to place the formula before his Working Committee. Rajaji, however, insisted that before doing so he must give his personal approval to it after which both he and Gandhiji should exert their influence with the Congress and the League to

have the formula pushed through. Mr. Jinnah, however, refused to "personally take the responsibility of accepting or rejecting it". He also suggested that the formula should come to him direct from Mr. Gandhi. That was reasonable enough, but Rajaji would have none of it. He finally informed Mr. Jinnah telegraphically (July 4, 1944) that "no purpose would be served by such procedure so long as it does not have your own support".

There was a howl of protest against both Rajaji and Mr. Jinnah from the Hindu Press. Rajaji was attacked for having fruitlessly obtained Gandhiji's approval to the formula. Mr. Jinnah was described as an inflexible and truculent negotiator, who would not be satisfied with the substance of Pakistan, so generously offered by the Hindu leaders. Liberal Hindu leaders and Press, however, characterised the failure of C. R. formula as a triumph for the League leader. The well-known parliamentarian, Srinivasa Sastri said at a public meeting at Madras on August 13, 1944:

> Mr. Jinnah, so far as the formula goes, has triumphed. He has got the principle of Pakistan admitted by those who have the greatest influence with the Congress and with the country. He is a lucky man among the politicians. Four years ago he got from Lord Linlithgow a declaration in which it was emphatically stated that no changes would be made in the future constitution of India, unless beforehand the Muslim community had been consulted, and they had also agreed to the changes. Mr. Jinnah can also pride himself on that point. He has got two great points—one from the regular Viceroy of India and the other from the unofficial "Viceroy". The third thing is that Mahatmaji against the old claim of the Congress has, without using these words, accepted the

position of the League as the only representative of the Muslims.[1]

Rajaji's refusal to allow Jinnah to have the formula deliberated upon by the League officially is not quite understandable. It was clear that Mr. Jinnah could not commit himself personally over a situation, which had far reaching consequences and involved a substantial departure from the Lahore Resolution of 1940.

Mr. Jinnah's reaction to the accusation of the Hindu Press was naturally sharp. Addressing the Council of the All-India Muslim League (July 30, 1944) at Lahore, he said:

> My only sin was that I requested Mr. Rajgopalachari to allow me to place his proposal before my Working Committee and that as Mr. Gandhi was no longer in prison I requested that he should directly communicate to me whatever proposal he may choose to put forward. What was the objection to such a course? I fail to appreciate the line adopted by them, and I am willing to face the verdict of Muslim League and any other independent and impartial man in India or abroad.[2]

The failure of the C. R. formula was followed by the famous Jinnah-Gandhi talks which began on September 9, 1944, at Jinnah's Malabar Hill residence in Bombay. Various interpretations have been given of the nature and substance of the parleys and the causes and circumstances leading to their failure. A careful scrutiny of the long correspondence that passed between the two leaders, however, makes it abundantly clear that the C. R. formula, as amplified by Mr.

1 *The Indian Annual Register* 1944, VII, p. 193. 2 *Ibid.*

Gandhi, which formed the main basis of the long talks was, in fact, nothing but a carefully comouflaged version of the Allahabad resolution of Jagat Narain Lal and that Mahatma Gandhi had in no way changed his attitude to the Muslim demand for self-determination.

Why was the C. R. formula rejected by Jinnah?

There is an impression among certain sections of of the people that the C. R. fomula was much more generous than the Radcliffe Award inasmuch as it had visualised a districtwise plebiscite, that would surely have given Gurdaspur and a major portion of Ferozepur District to the Muslims. Some critics infer from Mr. Jinnah's hesitation to accept the formula that he was not, at that time, quite sure of his success in the proposed plebiscite. This viewpoint is advocated by Khalid Bin Sayeed who says:

> Jinnah was at his best in this sort of tactical warfare. He was not satisfied with a mere desire on the part of Gandhi to meet him and explore the possibilities of a settlement. He wanted at first a total surrender from Gandhi on fundamentals, and once this was made, he was prepared to negotiate on details. This again goes to show that he was in no hurry to arrive at a compromise agreement with the Congress on some of the basic issues but probably wanted to wait until he was politically much stronger to obtain the best terms that the League and the Muslims could get.
>
> The correspondence that took place on the points at issue between the two leaders during the talks at Bombay also confirmed the impression that Jinnah was biding his time. . .
>
> . . . What must have made Jinnah reluctant to come to any definite and clear understanding with Gandhi at that time was his own position

as a leader of the Muslims. In September 1944, Jinnah was not sure whether he could produce overwhelming support for his demand among the Muslims if a plebiscite were to be held.[1]

This is a highly erroneous view, born of a casual and superficial reading of the situation as it existed then. The fact is that Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim League had by all standards achieved an invincible position by 1944. Excepting one bye-election in Bijnore (U. P.), the Muslim League had captured every single seat in the country, including two seats in the Frontier Province. The masses in the Muslim majority provinces were also firmly determined to attain the goal of self-determination. Even Malik Khizr Hayat Khan had openly supported the cause of Pakistan while Dr. Khan did not have the courage to oppose it, although both differed from the method, approach and the general policy of the Muslim League. Beverley Nichols rightly assessed the strength of the Muslim League and the hold of Jinnah on the Muslim masses in December 1943, when he wrote:

> Mr. Jinnah is in the position of unique strategic importance. He can sway the battle this way or that as he chooses. His 100 million Muslims will march to the left, to the right, to the front, to the rear, at his bidding, and at nobody else's . . . . that is the point.[2]

Why did Mr. Jinnah refuse to commit himself personally to the C. R. formula? The reasons are not far to seek. Firstly, Rajaji and Mahatma Gandhi were both negotiating in their personal capacity. Their commitments were in no way binding on the Congress.

1 Khalid Bin Sayeed, *Pakistan : The Formative Phase*, pp. 131-3.
2 Beverley Nichols, *Verdict on India*, p. 188.

On numerous occasions the Mahatma publicly committed himself to a viewpoint, but soon retraced his steps on the plea that his personal opinion could not morally or legally bind the Congress. On the other hand, Mr. Jinnah's personal commitment would have meant the end of the matter. Just one sentence, inserted in the Lahore Resolution, namely "with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary" had changed the whole complexion of the negotiations to the disadvantage of the Muslims of the minority provinces in that it precluded any discussion of a well-planned exchange of population to provide a homeland for all the Muslims of India. When the Lahore resolution was drafted the Muslim League leadership had in mind the exclusion of only the Ambala and the Burdwan divisions. But once the principle of readjustment was introduced, its application became a debatable issue. Mr. Jinnah's stand on this point had been very cautious but consistent from the beginning to the end. He refused to make any personal commitment, as we shall see later, even on the Mountbatten plan till the League Council had given its formal approval to it. The League's agreement to the "maimed, mutilated and moth-eaten" Pakistan was obtained almost under duress, under the threat of 'take it or leave it' held out by the Viceroy to Mr. Jinnah. The Labour Government being openly in league with the Congress, the Muslim League had no alternative but to agree to the partition of Bengal and the Punjab, much against its will. It was not, therefore, possible for Mr. Jinnah to commit himself in 1944 to something he did not do even in 1946-47, especially when the commitment was to be one-sided and without any surety of reciprocity from the Congress. That was why

in his very first meeting with Gandhiji, Mr. Jinnah insisted on a clear-cut undertaking from the former that his word would mean the word of the Congress.

Secondly, Gandhiji made no secret of his aversion to Muslims being recognized as a separate and independent nation. In his letter of September 15, 1944, he contemptuously wrote:

> I find no parallel in history for a body of converts and their descendents claiming to be a nation apart from the parent-stock.

Mr. Jinnah, on the other hand, insisted that

> Muslims and Hindus are two major nations by any definition or test of a nation. We are a nation of hundred million, and what is more, we are a nation with our own distinctive culture and civilization, language and literature, art and architecture, names and nomenclature, sense of values and proportion, legal laws and moral codes, customs and calender, history and traditions, aptitudes and ambitions—in short we have our own distinctive outlook on life and of life. By all canons of international law we are a nation.[1]

This debate on the two-nation theory was not merely a hairsplitting of terms or an academic war of words but had some very serious and far-reacting implications. If Muslims were accepted as a nation, the establishment of a national homeland for the 100 million Muslims would become inevitable. It would also mean that the Punjab and Bengal could not be divided. For, the right of self-determination through a plebiscite was to be exercised only by the Muslims as a nation. A division on territorial grounds, as envisaged in the C. R. formula, on the other hand, would lead to a division of provinces since in a

1 *Indian Annual Register* 1944, VII, p. 141-2.

plebiscite the whole population, both Hindus and Muslims, would have the right of self-determination being exercised not on the basis of religion but of territory. That was far from Mr. Jinnah's mind and so he could not be a party to any such scheme.

Thirdly, the C. R. formula did not envisage the creation of a sovereign Muslim State; it conceived a federal or at the most a confederal form of government. Mahatma Gandhi wrote on September 22, 1944:

> You summarily reject the idea of common interest between the two arms. I can be no willing party to division which does not provide for simultaneous safeguarding of common interests such as defence, foreign affairs and the like. There will be no feeling of security by the people of India, without a recognition of the natural and mutual obligations arising out of physical contiguity.[1]

Amplyfying this point further, he wrote on September 24:

> There shall be a treaty of separation which should also provide for the efficient and satisfactory arrangement of foreign affairs, defence, internal communications, customs, commerce and the like, which must necessarily continue to be matters of common interest between the contractting parties.[2]

Fourthly, the preamble of the C. R. formula stipulated that the Muslim League endorse the Indian demand for independence. This obviously added insult to injury. As pointed out by Mr. Jinnah,

> the Muslim League had made it clear not only by its resolutions but also by its creed, which was embodied in its constitution that we stand for

1 *Ibid.*, p. 145. 2 *Ibid.*, p. 147.

> freedom and independence of the whole of this sub-continent, and that applies to Pakistan and Hindustan.[1]

But the condition was not without significance and consequently, Mr. Jinnah enquired if the term 'independence' meant the Congress demand as embodied in the resolution of August 8, 1942, or in the Allahabad Resolution of April 1942. Mahatmaji replied that "the independence contemplated is of the whole of India as it stands". Pressed further by Mr. Jinnah, he admitted (September 15, 1944) that "independence does mean as envisaged in the A.-I. C. C. resolution of 1942".

This obviously was a clear negation of the Lahore Resolution. Its acceptance meant the withdrawal of the Pakistan demand since it visualised the creation only of autonomous provinces in Muslim majority areas.

But perhaps the strongest reason against the acceptance of the C. R. formula was the mode and method of its implementation. It left the granting to even the maimed and mutilated Pakistan of any rights of sovereignty to the mercy and sweet-will of the Hindu-dominated national government which was to inherit power from the British. Demarcation, plebiscite, and division—all were to take place after full power had been transferred to India, as a whole, through the so-called 'national government'. Power was not simultaneously to pass to two sovereign states, as it did under the June 3 Plan. Gandhiji explained this part of the formula in the following words:

> The process will be somewhat like this. We reach by joint effort independence for India as it

1 Letter, dated September 10, 1944, to Mr. Gandhi.

> stands. India becomes free, will proceed to demarcation, plebiscite and partition, if the people concerned vote for Partition. All this is implied in the Rajaji formula.[1]

Pressed for a further clarification, he wrote on September 24:

> If the vote is in favour of separation it shall be agreed that these areas shall form a separate state as soon as possible after India is free from foreign domination.[2]

Power was to be transferred by the British Government to a provisional interim government, which was "to be responsible to the elected members of the present assembly or to the newly elected one," i.e., to the permanent Hindu majority caucus. In the words of Gandhiji, this interim government:

> will have all the powers less than that of the Commander-in-Chief during the war and full powers thereafter. It will be the authority to give effect to the agreement that may be arrived at between the League and the Congress, and ratified by the other parties.[3]

On this ground alone Mr. Jinnah could have summarily rejected the C. R. formula. But he demonstrated an inexhaustible fund of patience in pursuing the matter relentlessly till the real Hindu game was unmasked. He, however, wrote in his last letter to Gandhiji on September 25:

> As a result of our correspondence and discussions I find that the question of division of India as Pakistan and Hindustan is only on your lips and it does not come from your heart.

The real position was that Mahatma Gandhi, during his parleys with Mr. Jinnah had completely

1 *Ibid.*, p. 141. 2 *Ibid.*, p. 147. 3. *Ibid.*, p. 141.

changed the complexion of the C. R. formula, as approved by him in jail in March 1943. He seemed to have changed his mind immediately on coming out of jail. That explained why Rajaji insisted, just after his first meeting with Gandhiji on his release (June 1944), on personal acceptance of the formula by Mr. Jinnah, knowing as he did that he will not commit either way. The Mahatma mutilated and almost destroyed the formula later with his own hands in a very subtle and fine manner. The pronouncements of Lord Wavell and Mr. Amery early in 1944 emphasizing the geographical unity of India must have contributed a good deal to the stiffening of Gandhiji's attitude. The diehard group in the ruling Conservative Party in Britain wanted to have no truck with the Congress, but at the same time it was out to destroy all chances of a Congress-League settlement. As the British were in no mood to liquidate His Majesty's Empire so soon after the War their representatives thought it tactically necessary to give an indication of their mind to Gandhiji in order to save him from accepting a situation that could lead to a united front of the two major political parties and place the Government in an embarrassing position. The scheme was successful. Gandhiji's obduracy grew harder and the matter was shelved.

Simla Conference and General Elections

In the beginning of 1945, the British Government decided to make yet another attempt to break the political deadlock in India. Now that the war in Europe was drawing to a close and the Japanese army was withdrawing in Burma, the British Government thought it proper to reorganize the Viceroy's Executive Council and make it representative of the main

political parties. Consequently, Lord Wavell who had replaced Lord Linlithgow as Viceroy in 1943, went to London (March 1945) for high-level consultations and returned in the beginning of June with a plan for reorganization of his Executive Council which he announced in a broadcast on June 14. The plan made it clear that the Cripps' Proposals of 1942 stood in their entirety. It did not aim at a final settlement of the constitutional problem nor did it prejudice the long range issues involved. Under it, all members of the Executive Council would be Indians except the Commander-in-Chief, who would be the War Member. The Council was to be representative of the Congress, the League and the minorities, Muslims and Caste Hindus being in equal number. The Viceroy would however, have the power of veto in matters relating to the protection of minorities.

The Congress leaders who were still in jail were released on the day of Wavell's broadcast, and the Viceroy convened a conference of Indian leaders at Simla on June 25, 1945, to discuss the plan. Mr. Jinnah and Mr. Gandhi were invited as the "recognized leaders" of the two main political parties. The Mahatma, however, objected to the term "Caste Hindus," which in deference to his wishes, was changed into "Hindus other than the Scheduled Castes". Mahatmaji also raised, as usual, the question of his representative capacity. He insisted that the Congress should be represented by its President. He, however, met the Viceroy the day before the opening of the Conference and all the time remained present at Simla "to advise the Viceroy and, through him, the British people".

The Viceroy asked the leaders of the parties to submit to him lists of their nominees to be recommended to His Majesty's Government for approval. The League leader refused to submit any list unless the principle of nomination was settled in advance. He insisted that all the Muslim members should be nominated by the League Working Committee, and by no one else. This created a deadlock; for, the Congress wanted at least one seat to be given to a Nationalist Muslim. Subsequently, they agreed to the nomination by the Muslim League of one Muslim, belonging neither to the Congress nor to the League. The Viceroy, on his part, wanted to reward the war services of the Punjab Unionist Party by giving one seat to it. Mr. Jinnah could never agree to such a proposal. Ultimately, the Viceroy drew his own list and showed the Muslim names to Mr. Jinnah. The list contained four names of the Muslim League leaders, one of the Unionist Party, and none of the Congress. The Congress list contained names of two Nationalist Muslims. None of the suggestions was acceptable to the League, and the Conference broke down.

Maulana Azad has given his own version of the Conference which is basically different from all other versions, including V. P. Menon's and Sitaramayya's. The Maulana says:

> The provisional list which Lord Wavell himself had prepared included four names in addition to the five names each of the Congress and the Muslim League. One of these was the representative of the Sikhs, two of the Scheduled Castes, and the fourth was Khizr Hayat Khan. Jinnah reacted violently against the suggestion that there should be two Muslims in the Executive Council,

> who were not his nominees. . . . If, therefore, the Conference had not broken down because of Jinnah's opposition, the result would have been that the Muslims, who constituted only 25 per cent of the total population of India, would have seven representatives in a council of fourteen.[1]

This is a gross misstatement of facts, for, the Viceroy's plan clearly laid down the principle of parity between the Muslims and the "Hindus other than the Scheduled Castes". As such the question of inclusion of seven Muslims in the Executive Council did not arise. The Viceroy's list could not possibly have contained seven Muslim names, because that would have violated the principle of parity, which formed the fundamental basis of the conference. The number of Muslims of all shades of opinion in the conference was to be only five, equal to that of the number of Caste Hindus, that is, one-third of the total. And these five Muslim members were to be nominated by three parties. Both the Congress and the Unionists wanted the Muslim League to nominate not more than two or at the most three Muslims. The Viceroy, however, was ready to concede four. Mr. Jinnah did not, and could not, agree to this division of the Muslim votes in the Council as against the solid bloc of the Hindu votes. The Muslim members would have spoken in three discordant voices: of the two non-League members one would have been the mouthpiece of the Congress, and the other would have danced to the tunes of his British patrons. This would have been a serious blow to the unity and solidarity of the Muslim people, which they had attained through the Muslim League's long and sustained efforts.

1 *India Wins Freedom*, p. 114.

Moreover, the problem before Mr. Jinnah was not that of securing a few positions of honour and responsibility. That stage had long passed. 1945 was not 1937, when the League leaders were keen to secure a few seats in some provincial ministries and the Congress had decided not to part with its monopoly of power. Now in 1945 the League was aspiring for a more sublime objective: Pakistan, a national homeland for all Muslims. Under the Wavell Plan the British government was going to invest the Viceroy's Council with extensive powers, enabling it, in due course, to function like a cabinet. The idea was that the Council would stay in office until some permanent settlement had been reached between the political parties.

And once involved in the intricacies of the day-to-day war and other administrative matters, it could, however, as well go on functioning indefinitely, thus putting the question of Pakistan in cold storage. The League leadership, on the other hand, was keen to go to the polls to prove its strength on the Pakistan demand. If the reconstituted Council had been ushered into office general elections could be delayed for an indefinite period. Mr. Jinnah was, therefore, opposed to any move that might entail any delay, howsoever small it might be.

The position of the Congress, however, was different. Defeated and frustrated, it was anxious to have its control restored in the provinces. That was why a clear contrast was visible in the attitudes of the two parties towards the British Government. While Mr. Jinnah was in a fighting mood, the Congress leaders wanted at all costs to win the goodwill and friendship of the Government of India. The Congress leaders and the Hindu Press, were all praise for Lord

Wavell, eulogising his efforts for a compromise; particularly Maulana Azad praised the personal efforts of the Viceroy and absolved him of all responsibility for the failure of the Simla Conference. Sardar Patel, who in 1942 had said, "We would rather be ruled by dacoits than by the British", now spoke in terms of conciliation and compromise. In a statement (June 30, 1945) he said:

> We have no enmity against the British people. If there is a change of heart in our British rulers we shall not pursue our quarrel.

It was thus clear that the whole trend of the Congress policy towards the British Government had undergone a complete change. From then on till partition it pursued a policy of active co-operation and collabration with the Unionists through the blessings of the Punjab Governor on the one hand and the Viceroy on the other.

Under these circumstances, Mr. Jinnah thought it imperative to expose the British tactics of disrupting the unity of the Muslims. He characterised the Wavell Plan as a 'snare' and declared that if the League had accepted them it would have signed the death-warrant of the Muslims. Addressing a press conference at Simla on July 14, 1945, he said:

> On a final examination and analysis of the Wavell Plan, we found that it was a snare. There was the combination consisting of the Gandhi Hindu Congress who stand for India's Hindu National Independence as one India, and the latest exponent of geographical unity, Lord Wavell, and Glancy-Khizr, who are bent upon creating disruption among the Musalmans in the Punjab. We are sought to be pushed into this arrangement, which, if we had agreed to, as proposed by Lord Wavell, we should have signed our death warrant

It is obvious to any intelligent man that, if we accept this arrangement, the Pakistan issue will be shelved and put in cold storage indefinitely, whereas the Congress will have secured under this arrangement what they want, namely, a clear road for their advance towards securing Hindu national independence of India, because the future Executive will work as a unitary Government of India, and we know that this interim or provisional arrangement will have a way of settling down for an unlimited period and all the forces in the proposed Executive plus the known policy of the British Government and Lord Wavell's strong inclination for a United India, would completely jeopardise us. . .

On top of this, came the last straw on the camel's back, that even about the five members of the Muslim bloc allotted to us communalwise, which is the essence of the Wavell proposals, we were told that the Muslim League was not entitled to nominate all the Muslim representatives as our chosen spokesmen; and there were two claimants —the Congress claimed two, and Glancy-Khizr on behalf of the Punjab claimed one. This move on the part of these two went at the very root and the very existence of the Muslim League regarding its position, character and status. But finally we broke as Lord Wavell insisted upon his having one non-League nominee of Malik Khizr Hyat representing the Punjab Muslims. As I have said, it is only the blind who cannot see that the All-India Muslim League is the only authoritative representative organization of the Mussalmans. If we had accepted the position as presented to us by Lord Wavell, we would have emerged out of this conference minus everything, and we would have entirely betrayed our people. It would have been an abject surrender on our part of all we stand for, and it would have been a death-knell

to the Muslim League. This was the position which faced us and we found that it was impossible for us to accept this arrangement.

Speaking at a public meeting on August 6, 1945, at Bombay, he said:

> There was so much venom and bitterness against the Muslims and Muslim League that the Congress were prepared to go to any length with two objectives. First, to hammer down, humiliate and discourage the Muslim League, and every method was adopted to bully us, coerce us and threaten us to surrender. The second was to see that the Muslim League was ignored and by-passed and for that purpose, they stooped to the lowest point that they threw up their principles to the winds. The Congress leaders who championed "Quit India" and "complete independence" and of which they make every year declarations, went to Simla defeated, frustrated and scared and threw themselves at the feet of Lord Wavell to secure certain portfolios, because there was no question of self-government within the framework of the present constitution.
>
> In order to be on the right side of Lord Wavell, they tried to beat down and humiliate the Muslim League and so work the Viceroy up as to get him to by-pass the League through a short-sighted and miscalculated policy adopted at Simla. This proved a complete failure. Now, they accuse Lord Wavell of breach of faith and allege that he had given an assurance to ignore and by-pass the League. I do not believe it. Even if the Viceroy wanted it, he could not have done it. . . .
>
> We want to fight the election so that they may once for all convince those who doubt our representative character.[1]

1 *Statesman*, August 7, 1945.

Replying to the insinuations of the Hindu press that he was playing the game of the British, he said on August 21, 1945:

> All this is false, and those who talk like this know it and they must, on saner reflection, realise how silly it is to carry on this false propaganda. . . .
>
> . . . To say that our attitude is to obstruct the achievement of freedom for Hindus and Muslims is utterly false, for we want both Hindu India and Muslim India to be free, but we cannot agree to any arrangement, which means freedom for Hindus and establishment of 'Hindu *raj*' and slavery for the Muslims—transfer of Muslim India from British *raj* to Hindu *raj*. That is the real issue.[1]

That Mr. Jinnah's misgivings about the intentions of the British Government were well-founded was proved by subsequent events. *The Indian Annual Register*, 1945, a pro-Congress documentary book, records:

> It can now be revealed that, during his last interview to Mahatma Gandhi two days previous to the announcement of the failure of Simla Conference, the Viceroy had asked Mahatma Gandhi to do his utmost to continue the cordial atmosphere created during the Simla negotiations and the Viceroy, on his part, had assured Mahatma Gandhi that he would do his utmost to review the situation after further consultations with His Majesty's Government, as soon as the election results were over. In fact, the Viceroy had asked for two months' time. This was the reason why Mahatma Gandhi did not make any public pronouncement on the failure of the Simla Conference.[2]

1 *Statesman*, August 13, 1945.
2 *The Indian Annual Register*, Vol. II, p. 147.

General Elections in India

Soon after the Simla Conference, general elections were held in England. The Labour Party was returned to power with a substantial majority, and on August 3, 1945, Mr. Attlee formed the new Government. Soon after, he called Lord Wavell to London for consultations about the future course of action in India. In a broadcast on September 19, he announced that general elections would be held in India in the winter of 1945-46, after which the necessary constitution-making machinery would be set up. He said that the Cripps' Proposals held the field till some more reasonable alternative was available.

Two days after this announcement, the All-India Congress Committee met at Bombay. There was a visible stiffening of attitude towards the Muslim League. Dr. Ashraf and Mian Iftikharuddin, who pleaded for the right of self-determination for the Muslims in the areas where they were in a majority, were hooted down.[1]

Mian Iftikharuddin's amendment to the main resolution of the Committee secured only seven votes. So did Dr. Ashraf's amendment. The harshness of the Congress attitude towards the League was evident from the speeches made by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel. Pandit Nehru said:

> We shall take the Muslims into our confidence and win them over completely to the Congress, but we shall not go again to the Muslim League leaders. As far as I can see it is better to be miles and miles away from the Muslim League.[2]

1 *Ibid.*, p. 97.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 98.

> Sardar Patel agreed with him and said
>
> that Congress cannot afford to have any truck with the League. There may be difference of opinion, but to obstruct the freedom of the country is a great sin. . . . There shall be no more offers to the League.[1]

Subsequent events, however, proved that their boastful utterances were presumptuous. The results of the General Elections placed Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim League in such a position of advantage that the Congress leaders were forced to open negotiations with the Muslim League in New Delhi and Simla.

It would be interesting to note that the demands of Mian Iftikharuddin and Dr. Ashraf substantially reflected the stand taken by the Congress in its policy resolution passed by the Working Committee at Poona on September 14 and 15, 1945. The Resolution had, *inter alia*, stated:

> Further, as declared by the All-India Congress Committee at its meeting held in Allahabad, in May 1942, the Congress cannot agree to any proposal to disintegrate India by giving liberty to any component state or territorial unit to secede from the Indian Union or Federation. Congress, as the Working Committee declared in April, 1942, has been wedded to Indian freedom and unity and any break in that unity, especially in a modern world federation, would be injurious to all concerned, and exceedingly painful to contemplate.
>
> *Nevertheless the Committee also declared that it cannot think in terms of compelling people in any territorial unit to remain in the Indian Union against their declared and established will.*

1 *Ibid.*, p. 99.

> While recognising this principle, every effort should be made to create conditions which would help the different units in developing a common and co-operative national life. Acceptance of this principle inevitably involves that no changes should be made which would result in fresh problems being created and compulsion being exercised on other substantial groups within that area. Each territorial unit should have the fullest possible autonomy within the Union consistently with a strong national State.[1]

Contrary to all traditions and conventions of the Congress, however, the resolution was not placed for ratification before the All-India Congress Committee. This was significant and pointed to the existence of internal differences in the Congress, which made it difficult for the supporters of the right of self-determination of Muslims to get the resolution passed at the All-India Congress Committee meeting. Apart from this, the Working Committee's resolution itself was a rigmarole, a compound of contradictions and indicated a weak and vacillating policy. While the first part supported the stand taken by the All-India Congress Committee meeting at Allahabad (April 1942), the second part talked of self-determination, perhaps only to placate the rightists in the Congress. Indeed, the Congress at this time was jumping in the dark, showing hesitancy and weakness, changing its stand, and shifting its grounds every now and then. Referring to this aspect, Lumby says:

> It is clear that on this most important issue there were in Congress divided counsels and much searching of heart. The obscure and contradictory language of the Working Committee's

1 Cited in E. W. R. Lumby, *Transfer of Power in India*, p. 62.

resolution satisfied no one. Even if it had declared unambiguously in favour of the right of secession it would not have gone far enough for the Muslim League: the immediate reaction of the League Secretary, Liaquat Ali Khan, was to declare that Muslims were 'determined not to allow a united India to come into existence'—the question of secession would not, therefore, arise. Right wing Congressmen were equally dissatisfied that there was not a clearer assertion of the resolve to maintain the unity of India. The net result of the resolution was to indicate that Congress as a whole was less inclined than either its own Muslim members or Gandhi (judging from the formula which he had discussed with Jinnah in 1944) to compromise with the Muslim League. The party's election mainfestoes, published a few weeks later, assumed throughout that the unity of India would be preserved, though in the form of a loose federation with the maximum autonomy for the constituent units: the most direct reference to rights of self-determination or secession was the observation that 'the federation of India must be a willing union of its various parts'. In effect, the elections were to be fought on the issue of Pakistan versus Akhand Hindustan.[1]

Election Results

The Congress fought the elections on the basis of the "Quit India" resolution; the League on the basis of Pakistan and on its claim to represent the whole of Muslim India. The results vindicated the League's stand on both fronts. In the Central Assembly the League captured every single Muslim seat. In the provinces it secured 428 out of 492 seats, i.e., about 86 per cent of the total. In some of the minority provinces it captured cent per cent seats. In Sind,

1 *Ibid.*, p. 63.

Mr. G. M. Syed and his followers, after getting themselves nominated and elected on the League tickets, deserted the League and joined the Congress camp. This made the functioning of a stable ministry difficult. Fresh elections had, therefore, to be ordered (December 1946) in which the League got a clear majority.

Though the elections had established the Muslim League's claim of being the sole representative organization of the Muslims, yet the League could form ministries only in two provinces: Bengal and Sind. In the Punjab though it had won all but seven Muslim seats and thus became the single largest party in the Legislature, it was denied office by the Governor who, in collaboration with Maulana Azad, decided to conspire against the League. A hotch-potch coalition party composed of heterogenous elements—the Akalies, the Unionists and the Congress—was formed under the leadership of Malik Khizr Hayat Khan Tiwana, to keep the League out of office. The Maulana played a very unedifying role in the situation. In view of the overwhelming majority of the Muslims supporting the Muslim League, as the election results had indicated, the best course for him as a Muslim leader was to come over to the side which the Muslims had chosen. He could thus have contributed to their growing strength and stability. Even as a Nationalist, it should have been his endeavour to bring about an understanding between the Congress and the Muslim League in the Punjab. He should have started negotiations with the Provincial League leaders instead of approaching Khizr Hayat to form a government with the support of the Congress. But it appears that his

sole object was to take revenge on the League. His plan was to by-pass the League at any cost, even at the cost of nationalism. He did not bother himself about the interests or sentiments of the Muslims. He won the game, at least for the time being, and succeeded in forming a coalition ministry of the Congress and the Unionists. And what is simply tragic, he considers this to be a great achievement of his political career. However, what it actually meant was that the Congress Party was put under the guidance of a group of only seven Muslim members, owing loyalty to the British Government. The Congress claimed to follow three principles in regard to ministry-making so far, namely, (a) it should have a majority in the legislature concerned, (b) it would not work with a party which was not prepared to adopt and implement its programme, and lastly (c) it would not shake hands with reactionary groups. In order to capture power in the Punjab, however, it threw all these principles to the winds and accepted one of the most reactionary politicians as the leader of the Unionist-Congress coalition.

Khizr Hayat thus became the Chief Minister of the Punjab and Mr. Bhim Sen Sachar, the leader of the Congress Party, just a Minister in his cabinet. This policy stands out in sharp contrast to that followed by the Muslim League. No advantage could move the League leadership to yield on matters of principle, even at crucial moments. The Unionists after their failure at the polls had offered to join the League on the condition that one of their representatives should be taken into the Ministry. The Quaid-i-Azam turned down this offer and issued definite

instructions that no Unionist could enter a League Ministry. The Provincial League could enter into coalition with any non-Muslim group, but it could not place itself under the obligation of the Unionists. For this policy the League had to pay a heavy price. If it had captured power in the Punjab as it could have done, the province might have been spared division, at least of the type it was subjected to.

Maulana Azad's account of these developments in the Punjab is, however, full of misrepresentations. He writes:

> In the Punjab, the Unionist Party and the League were balanced 'almost in equal numbers'. . . .[1]
>
> The position was specially difficult in the Punjab. It was a Muslim majority Province but no party had a clear majority. The Muslim members were divided between the Unionist Party and the Muslim League. I held discussions with both groups.[2]

To place the Muslim League, which had captured 90 per cent of Muslim seats, on the same level as the Unionists who had only 10 per cent and to say that the Muslim members were divided "almost in equal numbers" between the Unionist Party and the Muslim League is really a unique way of presenting historical facts. Again, he writes:

> The Governor was personally inclined towards the Muslim League but he found that he had no option but to invite Khizr Hayat Khan, the leader of the Unionist Party, to form the Government.[3]

1 *India Wins Freedom*, p. 124. 2 *Ibid.*, p. 123. 3 *Ibid.*

Events of those days are too fresh in the minds of most people to allow such a travesty of truth as this to go unchallenged. Who does not know that Bertrand Glancy, Governor of the Punjab at that time, was known for his hostile attitude towards the League? In 1943 he had encouraged Khizr Hayat Khan to revolt against the League and had removed Sirdar Shaukat Hayat Khan from the Cabinet for his pro-League inclinations. Again, it was on his suggestion that at the Simla Conference of 1945, Lord Wavell insisted on giving one seat to a representative of the Punjab in the face of the League's strong opposition. And yet the Maulana would have us believe that "the Governor was personally inclined towards the Muslim League"!

According to established parliamentary conventions, the leader of the Muslim League, the single largest party in the Punjab Legislature, should have been invited to form the Government, especially when certain other groups too had conveyed their willingness to support the League. Had the Governor been even impartial, let alone favourably inclined towards the League, the question of inviting the leader of a heterogenous group could never have arisen. But this is what actually happened. And yet the Maulana seems quite happy at his achievement; for, had he not succeeded in installing the Congress in power in the Punjab?

> What I had done in the Punjab was to put Congress into the Government despite the fact that the Governor had been working for the installation of a Muslim League Ministry. *Through my endeavours, the Muslim League had been isolated and Congress, though it was a minority,*

> *had become the decisive factor in Punjab affairs.* Khizr Hayat Khan was the Chief Minister through Congress support and he had naturally come under its influence.[1]

And this is how he gloats over his supposed feat of statesmanship:

> This was the first time Congress had come into the Government in the Punjab. This was a development which had till then been regarded as impossible. Political circles throughout the country declared that I had shown great skill and statesmanship in the negotiations which had led to the formation of the Punjab Ministry. Independent members throughout the country congratulated me in unqualified terms. The *National Herald,* which is the organ of the U. P. Congress, congratulated me on the manner in which I had solved the complex and difficult problem of the Punjab and went so far as to say that my handling of the situation was one of the clearest examples of statesmanship and skill in negotiations exhibited by any Congress leader.[2]

But what was the reaction of his co-religionists to Azad's role? The Maulana is understandably silent about it, but in order to complete the picture, we give below an extract from an article written at the time by a young Muslim writer, Shareef [al-]Mujahid. Discussing the activities of Azad since the abortive Simla Conference, he writes:

> . . . Since then,[3] he is engaged . . . in his efforts to manufacture "*quislings*" in the Muslim ranks. . . During the elections, he was made full use of by . . . [the Congress], and so also in the formation of ministries. It was only due to his machinations . . . that the "watch-dogs of the

1 *Ibid.*, p. 129. 2 *Ibid.*, p. 128.
3 i.e., the First Simla Conference.

bureaucracy" have been again installed . . . [in the Punjab], that Mr. G. M. Syed and others were encouraged in their open rebellion [against the League], and the *genuine* Muslim representatives are kept out of office in the Bardoli and Pant ministries.[1]

The Nawabzada simply echoed the feelings of Muslims all over the country, when he said:

> No single individual has done greater harm to the cause of Muslims in India during the last nine years than Rastrapathi Azad. He has done everything that human ingenuity could think of to create disruption amongst the Muslims and their unity and solidarity.[2]

Muslim India's disgust at the Maulana's activities was voiced by Jinnah at the time. He issued a statement to mark Azad's retirement from the Congress presidency which the Maulana had occupied for six long years (1940-46). In it Jinnah pointed out how Azad had outlived his utility, and said:

> He has been loyal to his salt, but had he served God with half the zeal, with which he served the Congress, he would have occupied at least an honourable position in society. The trick that a Muslim Divine is the President of the Indian National Congress now stands thoroughly exposed even abroad. . . .
>
> . . . A few years of life that are now left for him, he may enjoy in peace instead of being hackneyed by the Hindu Congress any more. The only course now left for him is to be pensioned off![3]

And as Mujahid records:

> And this suggestion . . . was echoed literal-

1 Shareef [al-]Mujahid, "The Role of M. Azad," *Weekly Observer*, Allahabad, June 21, 1946.
2 Cited in *ibid.*
3 Cited in *ibid.*

> ly from all the corners of the world. "Quit the Congress, Maulana Azad," was the appeal to the Rastrapathi from Muslims in British Isles, "Retire from political field" was the crux of the hundreds and thousands of telegrams received from Muslims, residing in Africa, and "Join the League and struggle for Pakistan and Islam in India" was the advice counselled by Ceylon and Malaya Muslims to the Congress President. . . This suggestion and these regular and persistant echoes have not gone in vain: at last at this hour, late as it is, the Congress leaders have come--rather made and persuaded—to realise that the so-called Muslim Rastrapathi stood thoroughly exposed before the bar of world public opinion and that he has outlived his utility. Further, with the end of elections—which have to their great detriment and disappointment, completely called off this Congress bluff to deceive and mislead the world—, and the final settlement of the Indian problem within sight, the task, for accomplishing which Azad was installed in the *gaddi*, had been over, so much so that Azad has practically little part to play, and as such there is no more any necessity of a Muslim, however anti-Muslim and nationalist he may be, to grace the Congress throne. . .[1]

So Azad vacated the Congress presidency for Jawaharlal. But what he had done to deny power to Muslims in the various provinces, and especially in the Punjab, continued to haunt them. The Congress-Unionist coalition which the Maulana had installed in power in the Punjab was obviously considered as a betrayal of Muslim interest, and Muslim Punjab refused to take it lying down. So that with the passage of months, anger and resentment against the Congress-Unionist Ministry continued to mount. The Provincial

1 *Ibid.*

Assembly met only once to pass the budget. The League Opposition was continuously denied a trial of strength with the Ministry on the floor of the House. An opportunity, however, presented itself in a bye-election in the district of Dera Ghazi Khan in the North-Muslim rural constituency, the most backward area of the Punjab. The Ministry imposed restrictions on public meetings and other popular activity to stop the League from putting its viewpoint across. In spite of this the League won the bye-election.

Frustrated by its defeat in a straight constitutional fight, the Ministry now decided to put down the growing Muslim upsurge by resorting to ruthless repression. Consequently, a frontal attack was launched by banning the Muslim League National Guards, and by making province-wide searches of the League offices. Uniforms and steel helmets of the volunteers were seized and seven members of the Provincial League Working Committee were arrested (January 24, 1947) in their office which was to be searched by the Police. This sparked off a province-wide mass movement against the Ministry. The very next day League workers, including members of the Assembly, courted arrest. The retaliation was so strong and prompt that the Congress-Unionist combine soon realized its folly and released all the arrested leaders on January 26. The ban on the National Guards was also lifted. The League leaders, however, made civil liberty an issue and refused to make any compromise on it. Consequently, the ban on public meetings and processions was defined on a mass scale. The Ministry re-arrested (January 27), all the League leaders, released earlier. The movement now spread through-

out the province like wild fire. Mass congregations and processions of Muslims were tear-gassed and *lathi*-charged. The people, however, refused to be cowed down. For more than a month the fight went on unabated. Thousands of men and women were arrested. The Khizr-Sachar combine unleashed all the reactionary forces to stifle the spirit of the Muslim masses. The Congress high command watched the situation for 34 days quietly without the least compunction of heart or prick of conscience. Hundreds of volunteers and members of public were loaded in police lorries and public vehicles and stranded at distances of 10 to 20 miles from the district headquarters from where they were forced to walk home on foot. Even women were not spared. At last on February 25, the Ministry surrendered on the issue of civil liberty, removed the ban on public meetings and freedom of speech, and released all the League leaders. But the magnitude of Muslim hatred and resentment against the Congress-Unionist Ministry had reached a point where nothing short of complete surrender could satisfy them. The movement was, therefore continued with still greater vigour till at last the Ministry lost all power of resistance and resigned on March 2, 1947.

The Hindus and Sikhs and the Unionists now made a common cause against the League. Instead of the League being invited to form the Government, Governor's rule was imposed in the province. The Sikh and Hindu leaders made furious speeches to incite their followers to wage a crusade against the Muslim League. A virtual war of succession started in the Punjab. By March 7, 1947, more than 1,000 persons were killed and 2,000 injured. The whole province became a battle-field.

This little deviation in the link of events has been permitted here to show the depths to which the Congress leadership had stooped in order to defeat the League. They used such repressive measures against the Muslims in the Punjab which even the British had not resorted to during the Congress "Quit India" Movement.

The anti-Muslim policy of the Khizr-Sachar Government and the manner in which it sent the Muslim League members to jail and victimised thousands of Muslims in sheer revengefulness, constitutes one of the darkest chapters in the history of Indian politics. The future historian alone will be able to record how far-reaching were the effects of Maulana Azad's policy of entering into an alliance with the Unionists against the Muslim League on the Muslim politics of the sub-continent. The fact nevertheless remains that but for the Congress-Unionist conspiracy against the Muslims the maps of India and Pakistan would have been different from what they are today. Bengal and Punjab would not have been partitioned in the manner in which they were done. Yet, who knows that in a way the Congress anti-Muslim policy coupled with the Maulana's hostility to the Muslim League might indirectly have contributed to the Muslims' survival?

CHAPTER VIII

CABINET MISSION - LEAGUE TUSSLE

As soon as the Labour Party came to power in England, the traditional British neutrality on the Indian communal question was abandoned in favour of more decisive support for the Indian National Congress. For one thing, the economic programmes of both political parties had many similarities; for another, personal relations between top Labour and Congress leaders were of the very best. To help the Indian National Congress establish a national democratic government on the British pattern in India had been Labour Party's ideal since long. During Conservative rule, the Labour Opposition had always championed the Congress cause in Parliament. When, therefore, it came into office in 1945 its great desire was to hand over power in India to the Congress alone.

In the words of Lumby,

> However, political power was now passing to a class which had none of the traditional interests in India and the British position there. Here was much sympathy with India's demand for freedom, but considerably less understanding of the more complex and debatable question of Muslim nationalism.[1]

1 Lumby, p. 37.

The Congress derived much strength from the fact that the British Labour Party considered it to be the only mass organization and could not dare offend its leaders. Indeed, the Labourites thought little of the Muslim League, even branded it as a reactionary body, and appeared to ignore altogether the revolutionary and dynamic forces that had taken hold of this organization since 1937. Ian Stephens, ex-Editor of the *Statesman*, Calcutta, refers to this aspect of the situation thus:

> But I guessed too at something deeper. Himself a hustler, "dynamic"—it was a word often on his lips and Pandit Nehru's—had he [Mountbatten] let himself be hustled into an over-simplified interpretation of Indo-Pakistani facts? Had his Leftist leanings misled him? The Congress party had friendly associations with British Leftists, with Labour. Perhaps to eyes such as his necessarily top-level eyes because in his job he had little time left for any but the top men—the Congress with its sophisticated charming leaders was progressive, dynamic party, and therefore congenial; the Muslim League, by contrast, reactionary.
>
> He might not have noticed, though so very intelligent—he was new to the sub-continent's complex politics—that in recent years the League, beneath the surface of a still conservatively inclined leadership, had developed a dynamism comparable to that of the Congress—indeed perhaps stronger and more explosive, because newer. To some extent its leadership was being unwillingly impelled by forces from below; the party had changed surprisingly fast from a debating society of a few elderly title-holders into a mass movement. In that respect at least, the disparaging verdicts on it doubtless dinned into him by

Congressmen were about five years out of date.[1]

The Labour Premier, Mr. Attlee, thus, lost no time in revealing his government's attitude towards the Congress. Rising in the House of Commons on March 15, 1946, he said:

> We are very mindful of the rights of minorities and minorities should be able to live free from fear. On the other hand, we cannot allow a minority to place a veto on the advance of the majority.

Simultaneously he announced that a Cabinet Mission of three Ministers, Lord Pethick Lawrence, Sir Stafford Cripps and Mr. A. V. Alexander, would shortly leave for India "in order to facilitate self-government for that country". Mr. Attlee's statement sent a wave of joy in Congress circles. The Hindu press welcomed this radical British departure from previous policies on the Indian communal question. The Muslims, on the other hand, sensing a possible British-Congress alliance, were perturbed, and great apprehension prevailed in the ranks of the League. The very next day Mr. Jinnah said in a press interview:

> I regret that Mr. Attlee, though in a guarded and qualified manner, has done rope-walking when he said, "on the other hand we cannot allow a minority to place a veto on the advance of a majority". He has fallen into the trap of false propaganda that has been carried on for some time. There is no question of veto or holding up the progress or advancement of a majority. To give a simile, says the spider to the fly: 'Walk into my parlour,' and if the fly refuses, it is said a veto is being exercised and the fly is intransigent.

1 Ian Stephens: *Horned Moon*, p. 113.

> It seems that he [Mr. Attlee] was speaking to a larger audience with many voices, but so far we are concerned, our position remains definite that we stand for a division of India and the establishment of Pakistan.

Again, although Britain had often sacrificed promises at the altar of expediency, rarely was such a *volte face* demonstrated except when the Labour Government announced formally through the Cabinet Mission that it did not stand by the pledges given to the minorities by the preceding governments. Said Lord Pethick Lawrence in his first official press conference in Delhi on March 25:

> As years went by, the situation changed, and the promises made had to be adapted to the existing situation, bearing in mind, of course, the spirit of those pledges and promises.

As far back as August 1940, Lord Linlithgow, as we have seen, had assured the League that "no constitution which would be opposed by any strong element of the Indian population could be imposed on India". And now when Stafford Cripps' attention was drawn to this assurance, he replied:

> As in everything else, the importance of minorities, their position and their influence may well have changed in the last five or six years, and that may change the application of any such statement that was made in the past. We really want to start this thing on a fresh basis. If we start going back to interpret everything that has been said from Queen Victoria down today, I think we will get into an awful muddle. The best way of approach is: We want to give independence to India as quickly and smoothly as we can. Let us sit down together and see how

> we can arrange it, rather than trying to analyse past statements. . .

These statements left no doubt about the Labour Government's real intentions towards the Indian communal question. Mr. Jinnah, however, was neither disappointed nor dismayed. He called (April 7-9) a Convention of Muslim League legislators to voice the true feelings of the Muslims regarding their future course of action. Members of the Cabinet Mission, then in Delhi, watched, though from a distance, this enthusiastic and determined gathering of 500 Muslim representatives, give a striking demonstration of unity and courage. The President of the Convention, Mr. Jinnah, declared in his inaugural speech:

> . . . We are of one and only one opinion that we stand for Pakistan, and we shall not falter or hesitate to fight for it, to die for it, if necessary; and achieve it we must or else we perish.
>
> If any interim arrangement and constitution is forced upon us, we have no other course open to us, but to resist it in every way possible. . . We shall not submit to any scheme of Government prepared without our consent. And if the British go to that length they will be guilty of the grossest breach of faith and the solemn assurances that they gave us when they wanted our blood and money in the midst of war by their declaration of August 1940. It will be the last straw on the camel's back, and we shall . . . resist it by all means if they betray us. God is with us because our cause is righteous and our demand is just to both Hindus and Muslims inhabiting this great sub-continent; so we have nothing to fear. . . .
>
> . . . I do not think there is any power or any authority that can prevent us from achieving

our cherished goal of Pakistan. There is only one condition—unity—, and I am confident that we shall march on from victory to victory until we have Pakistan.

At the conclusion of the Convention each member signed a pledge to God in the following terms:

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful, say: My prayer and my sacrifice and my living and dying are all for Allah, the Lord of the worlds.—*Al-Quran.*

I ————, a member of the Muslim League Party of the ———— Legislative Assembly/Council, do hereby solemnly declare my firm conviction that the safety and security and the salvation and destiny of the Muslim Nation inhabiting the continent of India lie only in the achievement of Pakistan which is the one equitable, honourable and just solution of the constitutional problem and which will bring peace, freedom and prosperity to the various nationalities and communities of this great subcontinent.

I most solemnly affirm that I shall willingly and unflinchingly carry out all the directions and instructions which may be issued by the All-India Muslim League in pursuance of any movement launched by it for the attainment of the cherished national goal of Pakistan, and, believing as I do in the rightness and the justice of my cause, I pledge myself to undergo any danger, trial or sacrifice which may be demanded of me.

"Our Lord bestow on us endurance and keep our steps firm and help us against the disbelieving peoples"—*Amin.*

Cabinet Mission Plan

The Cabinet Mission opened formal talks with Indian Leaders on April 3, 1946. These, however, proved fruitless. Later, the Congress and Muslim

League leaders were called to a joint conference at Simla on May 5. When this too failed, the Mission produced their own plan for transfer of power known as the Cabinet Mission Plan. The Plan categorically rejected the Pakistan scheme, mainly on grounds of Defence and Communications.

Under the Plan, the Constitution of the Union of India was to be framed by an indirectly elected Constituent Assembly. The provinces were, however, to be grouped into three sections, A, B and C; group A comprising the Hindu majority provinces and groups B and C comprising the Muslim majority ones. The groups were to be fully autonomous, each having its own constitution. The Centre was to control only three subjects, namely, foreign affairs, communications and defence; the rest were left exclusively to the Provinces. The Plan also stipulated that after fresh elections under the new group constitution had been held, the provinces would be free to opt out from the group to which they originally belonged.

A short-term measure in paragraph 8 of the Plan provided for an interim government at the Centre, composed solely of Indian members. Paragraph 8 also stated:

> In the event of the two major parties or either of them proving their unwillingness to join in the setting up of a Coalition Government on the above lines, it is the intention of the Viceroy to proceed with the formation of an interim government which will be as representative as possible of those willing to accept the statement of May 16.

Maulana Azad claims that the Cabinet Mission Plan was based on the formula given to the Mission

by himself and announced in a public statement on April 15.[1] Addressing the All-India Congress Committee meeting (July 7) he declared that the "plan was in fact a great victory for the Congress".[2] Mahatma Gandhi thought "it contained a seed to convert this land of sorrow into one without sorrow and suffering". He commended the Plan in the following words:

> After four days of searching examination of the State Paper issued by the Cabinet Mission and the Viceroy on behalf of the British Government, my conviction abides that it is the best document the British Government could have produced in the circumstances. It reflects our weakness, if we would be good enough to see it. Congress and the Muslim League did not and could not agree. *We would grievously err if at this time we were foolishly to satisfy ourselves that the difficulties are of British creation.* The Mission have not come all the way from England to exploit them. They have come to devise the easiest and quickest method of ending British rule. We must be brave enough to believe their declaration until the contrary is proved. Bravery thrives upon the deceit of the deceiver.[3]

League Accepts the Plan

The Hindu press welcomed the Plan as a triumph of Congress statesmanship. It gleefully remarked that the Pakistan scheme had been buried deep and "Jinnah had been brought to his senses". The bluff was, however, soon called off. The League leadership sprang a most agreeable surprise by calling a meeting of the Council of the All-India Muslim League within twenty days of the announcement of the Plan. On

1 *India Wins Freedom*, pp. 142-5. 2 *Ibid.*, p. 154.
3 Cited in Lumby, pp. 87-8.

June 6, the Cabinet Mission Plan was accepted as a compromise formula. The Plan was considered by the League Council as containing the germs of Pakistan. In clear and unequivocal terms, the Council's resolution said:

> In order that there may be no manner of doubt in any quarter, the Council of the All-India Muslim League reiterates that the attainment of the goal of complete sovereign Pakistan still remains the unalterable objective of the Muslims of India, for the achievement of which they will, if necessary, employ every means in their power and consider no sacrifice or suffering too great.
>
> That notwithstanding the affront offered to Muslim sentiments by a choice of injudicious words in the preamble of the statement of the Cabinet Mission, the Muslim League, having regard to the grave issues involved, and prompted by its earnest desire for a peaceful solution, if possible, of the Indian constitutional problem, and inasmuch as the basis and the foundation of Pakistan are inherent in the Mission's Plan by virtue of the compulsory grouping of the six Muslim provinces in Sections B and C, is willing to co-operate with the constitution-making machinery proposed in the Scheme outlined by the Mission, in the hope that it would ultimately result in the establishment of a complete sovereign Pakistan and in the consummation of the goal of independence for the major nations, and all the other peoples inhabiting this vast subcontinent.
>
> It is for these reasons that the Muslim League is accepting the scheme and will join the constitution-making body and will keep in view the opportunity and the right of secession of provinces or groups from the Union, which have been provided in the Mission's plan by implication.

> The ultimate attitude of the Muslim League will depend on the final outcome of the labours of the constitution-making body and on the final shape of the constitutions, which may emerge from the deliberations of that body jointly and separately in its three sections.
>
> The Muslim League also reserves the right to modify and revise the policy and attitude set forth in this resolution at any time during the progress of deliberations of the constitution-making body or the Constituent Assembly or, thereafter, if the course of events so require, bearing in mind the fundamental principles and ideals hereinbefore adumbrated to which the Muslim League is irrevocably committed.

Mr. Jinnah during the course of his presidential speech announced:

> Let me tell you that Muslim India will not rest content until we have established a full, complete and sovereign Pakistan. And I repel with all the emphasis that I can command the arguments and the reasons, and the way in which the Mission has mutilated the facts for no other purpose except to please and appease the Congress.
>
> In fact the foundation and the basis of Pakistan are there in their own scheme.
>
> I repeat from this platform that delay is not good either for the British Government or the Hindus. If they love freedom, if they love the independence of India, if they want to be free, then the sooner they realise the better that the quickest way is to agree to Pakistan. Either you agree or we shall have it in spite of you.
>
> What methods we would adopt and what instruments we would use would depend upon the time and circumstances.

The unconditional acceptance of the Plan by the League Council was widely hailed as a great step forward and a gesture of goodwill and co-operation on the part of the League leadership. Lumby remarks:

> In spite of Jinnah's insistence that the League's decision was that of the full Council, it was naturally, and correctly, regarded as mainly his work. As at Simla, the previous month, he had shown himself capable of taking a positive and constructive line, thus confounding the critics who alleged that he invariably negatived every proposal which fell short of his vision of an undefined and impracticable Pakistan, thereby exercising a veto on all constitutional advance. As at Simla too, he had contrived to make a concession without departing in any way from the basic principles of his party.[1]

Congress Disillusioned

Panic and disillusionment seized the Hindu press because, according to them, whatever was good with the League dissenting, was bad with the League assenting. The prospect of defeat stared the Congress in the face. The League's decision was either misconstrued as weakness or as a 'satanic design' to convert the grouped provinces into a nascent Pakistan. Whatever the considerations, Congress threw away the last chance of a united India. It began to shift ground; nervousness and confusion so gripped its ranks that different meetings passed different resolutions. The All-India Congress Committee said one thing; the Working Committee, the other. There was a plethora of comments, interpretations and amplifications, and yet the Congress position was as vague as ever. At its meeting (July 7) the All-India Congress

1 *Ibid.*, p. 94.

Committee accepted the Plan, but with such reservations and interpretations of the grouping clause as to change its entire complexion. Three days later, Jawaharlal in a press conference in Bombay touched off a controversy which ultimately destroyed the whole Plan. He said that the Congress would not consider itself bound by any condition or pledge and that the Constituent Assembly would be perfectly free to frame the constitution in whatever manner it liked. It could even modify the Plan itself, if it so desired.

Maulana Azad has given a graphic and detailed account of these developments:

> Now happened one of those unfortunate events which changed the course of history. On 10 July, Jawaharlal held a Press Conference in Bombay in which he made a statement which in normal circumstances might have passed almost unnoticed, but in the existing atmosphere of suspicion and hatred, set in train a most unfortunate series of consequences. Some Press representatives asked him whether with the passing of the Resolution by A.-I. C. C., the Congress had accepted the Plan *in toto*, including the composition of the interim Government.
>
> Jawaharlal stated in reply that Congress would enter the Constituent Assembly "completely unfettered by agreements and free to meet all situations as they arise".
>
> Press representatives further asked if this meant that the Cabinet Mission Plan could be modified.
>
> Jawaharlal replied emphatically that the Congress had agreed only to participate in the Constituent Assembly and regarded itself free to change or modify the Cabinet Mission Plan as it thought best.

I must place on record that Jawaharlal's statement was wrong. It was not correct to say that Congress was free to modify the Plan as it pleased. We had in fact agreed that the Central Government would be federal. There would be the compulsory list of three central subjects while all other subjects remained in the provincial sphere. We had further agreed that there would be the three Sections, viz. A, B and C, in which the provinces would be grouped. These matters could not be changed unilaterally by Congress without the consent of other parties to the agreement.

The Muslim League had accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan, as this represented the utmost limit to which the British Government would go. In his speech to the League Council, Mr. Jinnah had clearly stated that he recommended acceptance only because nothing better could be obtained.

Mr. Jinnah was thus not very happy about the outcome of the negotiations, but he had reconciled himself as there was no alternative. Jawaharlal's statement came to him as a bombshell. He immediately issued a statement that this declaration by the Congress President demanded a review of the whole situation. He accordingly asked Liaquat Ali Khan to call a meeting of the League Council and issued a statement that the Muslim League Council had accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan in Delhi as it was assured that the Congress had also accepted the Scheme and that the Plan would be the basis of the future constitution of India. Now that the Congress had declared that the Congress could change the Scheme through its majority in the Constituent Assembly, this would mean that the minorities were placed at the mercy of the majority. His view was that Jawaharlal's declaration meant that the Congress had rejected the Cabinet

Mission Plan and as such the Viceroy should call upon the Muslim League, which had accepted the Plan, to form the Government.[1]

About the difference in interpretation the Maulana writes:

> The major differences concerned the interpretation of the clauses relating to grouping in the Cabinet Mission Plan. Mr. Jinnah held that the Constituent Assembly had no right to change the structure of the Plan. Grouping was an essential part of the Plan and any change regarding grouping would alter the basis of the agreement. The Plan had itself provided that after the groups had framed the Constitution, a province could opt out. This, Mr. Jinnah said, was sufficient protection for any province which did not wish to belong to the group to which it was allotted. The Congress leaders of Assam held on the other hand that a province could stay out from the beginning. It need not join the group at all and could frame its constitution independently. In other words, according to Mr. Jinnah the provinces must first join the group and could thereafter, if they wished, separate. According to the Congress leaders of Assam, the provinces could start as separate units and could thereafter join the group if they so wished. The Cabinet Mission had held that the interpretation of the League on this point was correct. Mr. Jinnah argued that it was on the basis of the distribution of powers among the Centre, the Provinces and the Groups that he had persuaded the League to accept the Plan. Assam Congress leaders did not agree, and after some hesitation, Gandhiji, as I have already said, gave his support to the interpretation suggested by the leaders from Assam. *In fairness, I*

1 *India Wins Freedom*, pp. 154-6.

> *have to admit that there was force in Mr. Jinnah's contention.*[1]

The Maulana obviously does not agree with the Congress interpretation of the grouping clause. But it is interesting to note that at the time when the issue was being hotly debated the Maulana threw his entire weight in favour of the Congress interpretation. On June 14, 1946, he wrote to the Viceroy:

> You are, no doubt, aware of the strong feeling of resentment which exists among large sections of the people against some of the proposals in the statement, notably the idea of grouping. The Frontier Province and Assam have expressed themselves with considerable force against any compulsory grouping. The Sikhs have felt hurt and isolated by these proposals and are considerably agitated. Being a minority in the Punjab, they become still more helpless, as far as numbers go, in Section B. We appreciated all these objections, especially as we ourselves shared them. Nevertheless, we hoped that, according to our interpretation of the clauses relating to grouping which we still hold is the correct interpretation—for any other interpretation would endanger the basic principle of provincial autonomy—we might be able to get over some of the obvious difficulties.

Immediately after the decision of the Congress Working Committee on June 26, 1946, the Maulana issued a lengthy statement in which he spoke of the sovereignty of the Constituent Assembly and of the grouping of provinces in exactly the same spirit and tone as Jawaharlal did two weeks later. He said:

> Section 15 of the Cabinet proposals have clearly recognized the rights of provinces to form groups or not. The Cabinet Mission intend that

1 *Ibid.*, pp. 173-4.

the provinces should exercise this right at a particular stage.

The Congress Working Committee hold that whatever the intention of the Cabinet Mission, the statement of 16th May does not bear such interpretation. They hold that the provinces are fully autonomous and have the right to decide the question at any stage they like. Section 15 and the general spirit of the proposals support the Congress interpretation.

The provinces have the right to decide either at the very beginning before the group constitution has been framed at all or at the end after they have examined the group constitution as it has emerged from the Committee of the Constituent Assembly.

I am convinced that the Congress interpretation cannot be challenged. If a province decides to remain outside the group from the very beginning, it cannot be compelled to come in.

The Maulana, in his book, condemns Jawaharlal's statement of July 10 which, according to him, was the main cause of the partition of India. But the question is: why did Jawaharlal make such a statement? Was it a puerile lapse on his part or was it a deliberate and considered sabotage of the plan? Why did the Congress not make amends by declaring in unmistakable terms that it abided by the interpretation given by the authors of the Plan? True, the Congress after the League's decision to reject the Plan, made an attempt to rectify its error. In its meeting (August 8) the Congress Working Committee passed a resolution accepting the Cabinet Mission Plan in its entirety. But here too it added a rider that the Congress would be free to give its own interpretation to the Plan. It also thought that the provinces had the option of joining

the Group or remaining out of it, although according to the Plan it was mandatory for every province to join the Group in the very beginning.

Actually, although the Congress was happy that the country was saved from being partitioned, it could not brook the idea of Muslims controlling certain territories even internally. In fact, the Hindu leaders lacked self-confidence. They feared that if Muslims were allowed to dominate over a part of the sub-continent Hindu hegemony over them would not be possible.

In so thinking, they lost sight of the cardinal fact that real power lay with those who controlled the army. And Hindus could easily have obtained control of the Army of undivided India. With this control they could do anything to the Muslims. After the British withdrawal, the Hindu Central Government of independent India could have launched "police action" against a province under one pretext or another and deprived it of its autonomy. Neither the United Nations nor any other body could have intervened in a matter which was entirely within the competence of the Indian government. In this way, the one hundred million Muslims of the sub-continent would have been reduced to the position of unprivileged citizens as their 40 million co-religionists have been in "secular" Bharat since Independence. Perhaps, their condition in an undivided India would have been worse. Now, a strong Pakistan provides some guarantee for the security of the life and property of the Indian Muslims but if the Cabinet Mission Plan had been implemented, no such guarantee would have existed.

Ignoring this aspect of the matter altogether, the

Congress took a short range view of things and deliberately created a situation which forced the Muslim League to reject the Plan. What it aimed at was to qualify and prepare itself to take control of the interim Government. Once that happened, it thought Mr. Jinnah—a constitutionalist by temperament—would be hustled into accepting the Congress as successor to the British. Subsequent events proved, however, how wrong and short-sighted these calculations were.

Cabinet Mission Breaks its Pledge

On the question of joining the Interim Government also, the Congress began to have second thoughts. The Viceroy had given an assurance to Mr. Jinnah before the League accepted the Plan that Congress-League parity would form the basis of the Interim Government which would be composed of 12 members : 5 Congress, 5 League and two minorities. But the Congress rejected this Plan, and the Viceroy and the Mission started vacillating. The Viceroy subsequently raised the total number of members to 13, changing the League-Congress or Hindu-Muslim parity into a Caste Hindu-Muslim parity and adding one more seat, that of the Scheduled Castes, to the Congress quota. Even this was not acceptable to the Congress. The Mission further yielded and raised the number to 14 (6 : 5 : 3), only to court yet another rejection by the Congress.

The only course open to the British Government now was to proceed with the formation of the Interim Government with the help of the Muslim League as laid down in paragraph 8 of the Plan.

Amplifying the paragraph, the Viceroy had, on June 4, written to Mr. Jinnah:

> You asked me yesterday to give you an assurance about the action that would be taken if one party accepted the scheme in the Cabinet Delegation's statement of May 16 and the other refused.
>
> I can give you on behalf of the Cabinet Delegation my personal assurance that we do not propose to make any discrimination in the treatment of either party and that we shall go ahead with the Plan laid down in the statement so far as circumstances permit if either party accepts, but we hope that both will accept.

But the Cabinet Delegation, taking refuge behind the conditional acceptance of the Congress, postponed indefinitely the formation of the Interim Government, and instead formed a Care-taker Government, purely of officials. In his letter of June 28, the Viceroy wrote to Mr. Jinnah:

> Secondly, the assurance which you quote in your statement related specifically to the particular interim Government that would have been set up if both major parties had accepted the statement of June 16.

Mr. Jinnah wrote back the same day:

> The Cabinet Mission and yourself issued an official statement late in the evening of June 26 and, as I have already pointed out in my statement issued to the press yesterday, by that pronouncement you have chosen to go back upon your pledged word by postponing the formation of the interim government.

Then on June 29, he repeated the charge in a letter to the Viceroy in the following words:

> I maintain that the Cabinet Mission and Viceroy have gone back on their word within ten

> days of the publication of their final proposals in not implementing the statement of June 16 and I fully endorse what has been put so well—"Statesmen should not eat their words".

The General Secretary of the All-India Muslim League, Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan, in a press statement exposed the British Government and the Viceroy, and said:

> There is not the slightest doubt that the Cabinet Ministers and the Viceroy have eaten their words and are guilty of breaking their pledges which they had given to the Muslim League, in order to placate the Congress. . . . It is bound to shake the faith of the people in the word and pledges of British statesmen.

Disappointed at the non-co-operative attitude of the Congress and the pro-Congress policy of the British Government, the League leadership decided to give up the path of constitutionalism and to ask and prepare the nation for direct action. The Council of the All-India Muslim League met at Bombay (July 27, 1946) to reconsider the situation in the light of new developments. For over 150 minutes the League President spoke to the Council with his characteristic candour in a calm, clear but determined voice:

> The British Government have undoubtedly gone back on their words. They have played into the hands of the Congress. They have tried to propitiate the goddess of the Congress and postponed the formation of the interim government. They have accepted what is not acceptance at all on the part of the Congress of the long-term proposal.
>
> Can they conscientiously say from the way in which they conducted the negotiations here that they are entitled to expect from Muslim

India faith in the Cabinet Mission or the British Government that has endorsed this statement? When representatives of His Majesty's Government go back on their own words within ten days and dishonour themselves and the Government they represent and the nation to whom they belong, what confidence can we have in these people?

Early on the morning of June 25, the indefatigable Sir Stafford Cripps went and woke up Mr. Gandhi in the Bhangi Colony. It seems he did not cut much ice. He came back and Lord Pethick-Lawrence was put on the scent of Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel, the strong man of the Congress. He waylaid Mr. Patel on the road and took him to his house and there they concocted a device. The Congress was persuaded to accept the long-term proposal even with their own interpretations and reservations and the Mission assured the Congress that it would abandon the interim government scheme of June 16.

It is again like a drowing man catching a straw. They wanted somehow or other to say that their Mission was not a complete failure. This is exactly what happened. . . .

Immediately, the Congress gave its reply. We gave our reply. Now we are told that clause 8 means something which it does not mean. Sir Stafford Cripps, when he was questioned in the House of Commons, found it very difficult to wriggle out of it and he resorted to jugglery of words and misleading the House. I am sorry to say that Cripps debased his legal talents and put this dishonest interpretation on this clause. He overpowered the venerable and idealistic Secretary of State. . .

. . . A fantastic and dishonest construction was put on the clause "by that ingenuous

> juggler of words, Cripps" to evade the formation of the interim government. It was only Mr. Alexander who intervened in the interview and said that the Mission had not arrived at any decision and that they wanted to know Mr. Jinnah's views.
>
> I am not a trader. I am not asking for concessions for oil, nor am I higgling and haggling like a *bania*. Is it not absurd for the Secretary of the State for India to come out with this phraseology that Mr. Jinnah cannot claim monopoly. Are the Muslims a commodity?

Alluding to the compliments paid by Sir Stafford Cripps in the House of Commons and by Lord Pethick Lawrence in the House of Lords to Mr. Jinnah's courage and statesmanship, he said:

> I feel we have exhausted all reasons. It is no use looking to any other source for help or assistance. There is no tribunal to which we can go. *The only tribunal is the Muslim nation.* It is no consolation to me that Lord Pethick-Lawrence and Sir Stafford Cripps have acknowledged that we made very substantial and vital concessions whereas the Congress has not budged an inch. I wish I could honestly pay a tribute to their courage and statesmanship which they so sadly lacked in handling these negotiations. Nor have I seen any sign of the slightest gesture of goodwill or conciliation or any indication of co-operation on the part of the Congress.
>
> I am confident the Muslims of India are not going to be perturbed, nor are we going to suffer from any sense of frustration. . . . The Muslim League acted throughout the negotiations as an honourable organization. We negotiated on high principles. We made concession after concession not because we were overawed. We did so purely because of our extreme anxiety for an amicable

and peaceful settlement which will lead not only the Muslims and the Hindus but also other communities, inhabiting this subcontinent, to the achievement of freedom. But the Congress stood there like a mule. It has no other consideration except the one, namely, how to down the Muslim League.

We worked with clean hands. The Muslim League is the only party that has emerged from these negotiations with honour and clean hands. The Mission went back on their words with regard to the interim government. The Mission today is cowed down and paralysed. The Congress has resorted to methods that even an ordinary individual will be ashamed of.

The British Government can never be taken on their word. Within ten days, the representatives of the British Government went back on their word. The Cabinet Mission tried its best to propitiate the goddess of the Congress and postponed the formation of the interim government. They have declared that the Congress had accepted the long-term proposals which is not acceptance in the real sense of the term.

Our motto should be discipline, unity and trust in the power of our own nation. *If there is not sufficient power, create that power*. If we do that, the Mission and the British Government may be rescued, released and freed from being cowed down by the threats of the Congress that they would launch a struggle and start non-co-operation. Let us also say that. . . .

I tell you the Congress has done the greatest harm to the peoples of India in which the Caste Hindus are in an overwhelming majority by its pettyfogging, higgling attitude during the recent constitutional negotiations. The Congress is full of spite towards the Muslims.

Concluding, Mr. Jinnah said:

> I might say that, today, Muslim India . . . . is stirred as never before, and has never felt so bitterly. . . . We have learned a bitter lesson—the bitterest, I think, so far. Now there is no room left for compromise. Let us march on.[1]

The Council by a resolution passed on July 29 withdrew its support to the Cabinet Mission Plan and reiterated that nothing short of Pakistan would be acceptable to the Muslims. It also appointed a Committee of Action to prepare a programme for Direct Action. All the title-holders present at the meeting renounced their titles as a token of protest against the partial attitude of the British Government.

This resolution stirred the whole country. Both the Congress and the British Government were stunned by this revolutionary step of the League.

Commenting upon the decisions of the Bombay Session of the League Council, *Blitz*, a powerful pro-Congress weekly of Bombay, wrote:

> The worst enemies of the Muslim League cannot help envying the leadership of Mr. Jinnah. Last week's cataclysmic transformation of the League from the reactionary racket of the Muslim Nawabs, Noons, and Knights into a revolutionary mass organization dedicated, by word if not by deed, to an anti-Imperialist struggle, compels us to express the sneaking national wish that a diplomat and strategist of Jinnah's proven calibre were at the helm of the Indian National Congress. There is no denying the fact that by his latest master-stroke of diplomacy Jinnah has outbid, outwitted and outmanoeuvred the British and

1 Most of the extracts of Jinnah's speeches, letters and statements in this chapter have been reproduced from *Jinnah* by Hector Bolitho and *Cabinet Mission and After* compiled by Ashraf.

Congress alike and confounded the common national indictment that the Muslim League is a parasite of British Imperialism.

Direct Action Day

The Muslim League Working Committee, in pursuance of the Council's decision, fixed August 16, 1946 as 'Direct Action Day'. The object was not to start a Direct Action movement but to explain to the people the implications of the Bombay Resolution of the Council. The Day passed off peacefully in the whole country except in Calcutta, where a very serious riot broke out. More than 4,000 lives were lost and 10,000 people, both Muslim and Hindu, were injured, according to official figures. Never before in all the years of British rule was so much blood shed in any riot in India. While the Congress blamed the League Ministry of Bengal for the holocaust, the League leadership characterized it as an organized Hindu attempt to discredit the League Ministry and to make Direct Action Day a failure. A head-on tussle now began between the Muslim League on the one hand and the Congress-Labour combined on the other. The Labour Party was determined at all costs to hand over power to the Congress, and the Muslims were equally determined to resist it at all costs. The extent of Muslim bitterness and anger against the British is reflected in the following *Id* message of Mr. Jinnah in August 1946. He said:

> Today the horizon is dark for us. The doings of the British Government and the Viceregal Lodge are shrouded in mystery; we are vilified, misrepresented and threatened from every direction and the Viceroy has gone headlong and seems to be persistent in his career, in a manner which

is reckless and irresponsible. The Muslim League is ignored and by-passed; tremendous false propaganda is carried on to throw the blame on the Muslim League, for which there is not an iota of justification; the Viceroy and the British Government have surrendered to the Congress and it only remains for them now frankly to make a declaration that they have abdicated and are about to hand over to the Fascist Caste Hindu-Congress, the government of this subcontinent.

The British public is kept in darkness and Parliament is in recess. This has created a very grave and dangerous situation for us and we must face it as a united nation and go through the test and fire of being suppressed, oppressed and persecuted. I am confident that if 100 million Muslims stand united, all the manoeuvres, machinations and designs of our opponents will fail miserably and we shall emerge out of this struggle triumphantly and shall achieve Pakistan which is our only salvation, and without which we perish.

We have argued; we have reasoned; we have supplicated and we have made great concessions but all to no purpose. There remains in front of us a grim struggle and we must face it boldly and courageously but in a disciplined and organized manner and our failure or setback should not make us despair; nor should our success elate us. Our demands are just and righteous and we cannot fail.

Before installing the Congress in office as the interim Government, Lord Wavell invited the League President (July 22) through a letter to enter the Government on the basis of a formula which was entirely different from that envisaged in the June 16 Plan. In reply to this, Mr. Jinnah wrote on July 31:

I am in receipt of your letter of 22nd July and I notice that this is the fourth basis that you are suggesting for the formation of your interim government. From 5 : 5 : 2 you came to 5 : 5 : 3 and then 5 : 5 : 4 as embodied in the statement of the Cabinet Delegation and yourself dated the 16th June, 1946, which was announced by you as final. Now you are making this fourth proposal, i.e., 6 : 5 : 3.

Every time the Congress turned down the previous three proposals as you were unable to appease them or propitiate them; and every time the departure was prejudicial to the League and in favour of the Congress.

And now you have put your fourth proposal for my consideration.

It gives a go-by to all the important terms which were in favour of the Muslim League; the Congress will have six members out of fourteen as against five members of the Muslim League which breaks straightaway the principle of parity; and you are letting down the Scheduled Castes as one of them is proposed to be nominated by the Congress and not by the real spokesmen of the Scheduled Castes. I note that you say that five members will be nominated by the Muslim League. Next, three members by the minorities be nominated by the Viceroy without reference to or consultation with the Muslim League. The only indication that you have given is that one of these places will be kept for a Sikh.

Then you proceed on to say that "it will not be open either to the Congress or the Muslim League to object to names submitted by the other party, provided they are accepted by the Viceroy" and from this I gather that it will be open to the Congress to nominate a quisling Muslim.

As to the distribution of portfolios, I note you say that "the Congress and the Muslim League

will have an equitable share of the most important portfolios," and not equal as it was originally proposed.

As to the assurance about safeguards, i.e., that a major communal issue could only be decided by the consent of both the major parties, you say that "it will be only considered if freely offered by the Congress," but you do not attach much importance to it and you conclude by saying that if the interim government does not work when formed on this basis and if we find conditions unsatisfactory, it will be open to us to withdraw. I believe in the principle "prevention is better than cure".

Congress Takes Over

On September 2, 1946, the Congress took office at the centre. The Muslims of India observed a 'Black Flag Day' throughout the country to mark their protest against the Anglo-Hindu alliance.

In Bombay, serious riots broke out and according to press reports 622 people were killed in two months. The atmosphere in the whole country was explosive. India again became a land of sorrow and suffering. Mahatma Gandhi wrote at this time:

> We are not yet in the midst of civil war. But we are nearing it. At present we are playing at it.[1]

The irony is that according to all records including *India Wins Freedom*, Mahatma Gandhi himself, by encouraging Assam and the Frontier Province to revolt against the grouping scheme of the Cabinet Plan, had brought the situation to the brink of a civil war.

1 Cited in Lumby, pp. 117-18.

Jawaharlal, in his capacity as Minister of External Affairs, toured the Frontier Province and the tribal areas early in October 1946. Since 1930, this area had been under the sway of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, nicknamed the "Frontier Gandhi", an active collaborator of the Congress. Congress had spent enormous amounts to keep the territory under its hold. But, now, the situation was different. The demand for Pakistan had created a new stir among the Pathans, who could not be a party to power being transferred from the British to the Hindus, with Muslims reduced to the position of slavery.

Congress Ministry Disillusioned

But the Congress leadership, relying on the false assurances of the Khan Brothers, would not believe this revolutionary change in the Frontier in favour of the Pakistan Movement. According to Maulana Azad, official advice to that effect was turned down, being prejudiced by Jawaharlal. He went to Peshawar only to find that the Congress Chief Minister of the Frontier Province, Dr. Khan Sahib, was himself a prisoner as he came to receive the Congress leader under heavy police protection. Demonstrations against the Congress were so spontaneous and deep that wherever Nehru went he was received with unfriendly speeches, public professions of loyalty and support to Jinnah, black flags and slogans of 'Go Back'. In the tribal area, he was actually fired upon, bullets whistled past him, and stones were thrown at him and his car. Nehru was injured on the forehead and many of his officers were subjected to rough treatment. Within one month the Congress realized that its reading of the situation was wrong. Far from being browbeaten by

the Congress in power, the League had emerged strengthened and more powerful than ever before. Realizing this, the British Government could no longer hope to transfer power peacefully without taking the League into the Interim Government. Lord Wavell, therefore, made one more effort to do so. On October 2 he had an interview with Mr. Jinnah and formally proposed five seats in a Cabinet of fourteen. From the correspondence that followed this interview, it was clear that no agreement could be reached. Simultaneously, Jawaharlal and Gandhi tried to persuade Mr. Jinnah to enter the government, but failed.

Gandhi-Jinnah Formula

During the League-Congress negotiations a memorable episode occurred, which throws light on the nervousness characterizing the Congress leadership of those days. With Nawab Hamidullah Khan of Bhopal as an intermediary, Mahatma Gandhi agreed on October 4 to the following formula with Jinnah:

> The Congress does not challenge and accepts that the Muslim League now is the authoritative representative organization of an overwhelming majority of the Muslims of India. As such, and *in accordance with democratic principles, they alone have today an unquestionable right to represent the Muslims of India.* But the Congress cannot agree that any restriction or limitation should be put upon the Congress to choose such representatives as they think proper from amongst the members of the Congress as their representatives.

This formula formed part of a letter of Mahatma Gandhi sent to Mr. Jinnah through the Nawab of Bhopal. When, however, Jawaharlal and other Congress leaders came to know of it they at once

repudiated it. Jawaharlal in his letter of October 6, 1946, to Mr. Jinnah said:

> We feel that the formula is not happily worded.

Then in his letter of October 8, he said:

> My colleagues and I did not accept the formula agreed to by Gandhiji and you.

Consequently, Mahatma Gandhi himself withdrew it. In his prayer meeting on October 7, he referred to this episode and said:

> I feel impelled to tell you of the error committed by me three days ago. I was thoroughly ashamed of it. For me at this time of life, it is unpardonable. No public servant had the right to act in this way. I seem, for the moment, to have lost confidence in myself and the belief that I would live for 125 years.

League enters the Interim Government

The Congress did not budge an inch from its stand and the Viceroy also showed no change of heart with regard to the manner of the League's entry into the Interim Government. Mr. Jinnah informed both of them that the League could not accept their decisions regarding the composition and nature of the Interim Government. Displaying a sense of realism and strategy and without compromising his principles, however, he decided to nominate five representatives to the Interim Government in his own right. On October 13, 1946, he wrote to the Viceroy:

> Since, according to your decision, we have a right to nominate five members of the Executive Council on behalf of the Muslim League, my Committee have for various reasons come to the conclusion that in the interests of Mussalmans and other communities it will be fatal to leave the

entire field of administration of the Central Government in the hands of the Congress. Besides, you may be forced to have in your interim government Muslims who would not command the respect and confidence of Muslim India, which would lead to very serious consequences: and, lastly, for other very weighty grounds and reasons, which are obvious and need not be mentioned, we have decided to nominate five persons on behalf of the Muslim League in terms of your broadcast dated August 24, 1946, and your two letters to me dated October 4 and 12, embodying clarifications and assurances.

Thus the League entered the Executive Council of the Viceroy, then popularly known as the "Interim Government" without any obligation or commitment, in its own right under the Government of India Act, 1919.

The League's object in joining the Interim Government was not to gain any permanent advantage or to share in the fruits of government at the Centre but to hold the Congress in check against possible usurpation of Muslims' rights. The League did not enter the Government to co-operate in making the Union Covernment a success, but to demonstrate the unworkability of it. This step gave a fatal blow to the machinations of the Congress which aimed at establishing working conventions to give the Interim Government the role of a shadow cabinet of a future republic, with Jawaharlal as leader of the Government and Prime Minister in all but name. But in the absence of an agreement on major issues, co-operation between the two parties was out of the question. The Government was divided into two warring camps, the Congress bloc and the League bloc. The two blocs had

their own leaders and held separate meetings. The battle that started after the Direct Action Day went on unabated, the cockpit having merely shifted from the public platform to the Parliament. Soon, the Congress members of the Government were to discover that the Finance portfolio which the League held was not merely a technical one; on the contrary, it gave power to the League to exercise a veto in every department. No scheme could be put through without the Finance Ministry's sanction. The Home Member, Sardar Patel, could not get his own official residence painted and furnished without the sanction of the Finance Ministry. Nor could he as much as appoint a peon on his own. Even the Parliament and the Constituent Assembly could not meet and function unless the expenditure was allocated and sanctioned by the Finance Department.

Liaquat's Budget

To cap it all, Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan presented a budget in March 1947, which seriously disturbed the moneyed sympathizers of the Congress. When the budget was published Maulana Azad commended it: "It gives salt to the poor and a grave to the rich", he said. But the Hindu leaders, particularly Patel, Rajendra Prasad and Rajagopalachari opposed it tooth and nail. The budget for ever exploded the charge that the League was a body of capitalists. By opposing it the Congress revealed where its real sympathies lay —with the capitalists and against the common man. On the request of the Viceroy, the main features of the budget had been made known to the Congress representatives, but they learnt its details only when it was presented before the Assembly. Liaquat's

budget speech in the House is one of the most brilliant chapters of the Pakistan Movement. Before the budget could be approved, Lord Wavell had handed over charge to Mountbatten. Mr. Johnson records:

> Wavell has warned Mountbatten that he will find this a very awkward opening problem to tackle when he presides over his first Executive Council. Liaquat, as Finance Minister in the Interim Government, by proposing heavy taxes on all large incomes, has put the Congress into the invidious position of being called upon to protect its big business supporters and of seeking relief for them apparently at the expense of its own progressive and equalitarian declarations.[1]

League refuses to join the Constituent Assembly

Within three weeks of the Muslim League joining the interim Government a serious constitutional crisis developed. Before the League had entered the Government, the Congress had fixed December 9, 1946, as the date of inauguration of the Constituent Assembly. In November they urged upon the Viceroy to force the League to revise its earlier decision regarding the rejection of the Cabinet Mission Plan and to participate in the Assembly.

The Viceroy, in a letter (October 4) to Mr. Jinnah, had assumed that "the League Council will meet at a very early date to reconsider its Bombay resolution". Lord Wavell had also informed Jawaharlal (October 23) that the Muslim League's entry in the Constituent Assembly would be the logical consequence of its joining the Interim Government. Similar assurances were given by him to the British Government. The attitude of the Muslim League, however,

1 Alan, Campbell-Johnson: *Mission with Mountbatten*, p. 43.

was very clear from the outset. In the afternoon of October 26, Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan was asked at a press conference whether the League had given any assurances or undertakings before joining the Government. He said:

> We are a responsible organization. We know what our duty is and *there is no question of giving any assurance to anybody*. This Government has been formed under the present constitution and as such there is no such thing as joint or collective responsibility. Pandit Nehru is, therefore, nobody else's leader except of the Congress bloc in the Government. The term 'leader of the interim government' is a polite fiction. The League bloc recognizes no other leader except its own.

The Viceroy, the British Government and the Congress, however, remained under the delusion that since the League had joined the Interim Government it would have no hesitation in participating in the Constituent Assembly. According to them, participation in the Interim Government was *ipso facto* a commitment to take part in the Constituent Assembly. On the other hand, Mr. Jinnah said that:

> The stand taken by the Congress on the questions of Assam and the Frontier amounted to the rejection of the Cabinet Mission Plan by the Congress. The participation of the Congress in the interim government was in clear violation of the statement of the British Government, and the assurances contained therein. In fact, the Congress representatives were there not under the Cabinet Mission Plan: this had not been accepted by the Congress in entirety. At best the interim government was to work under the Government of India Act of 1919 and the 'interim Ministry' was therefore no different from the Viceroy's Executive Council.

It was, according to him, "a misnomer to call it a Cabinet". Similarly, the Sikhs had also rejected the Plan but they were represented in the Interim Government. Obviously, therefore, there was no connection between a party's participation in the Constituent Assembly and its representation in the Interim Government. According to Mr. Jinnah's interpretation, the League had joined the Interim Government under the Act of 1919 and there was no justification in demanding its participation in the Constituent Assembly on that score. If the demand had any justification the Viceroy should first ask the Congress and the Sikhs to accept the Cabinet Mission Plan in its entirety.

The "Representative" Character of the Constituent Assembly

The most important aspect of the problem as seen by Mr. Jinnah was that without the representatives of the League the Constituent Assembly could not be considered a fully representative body, and the constitution framed by it could not bind all sections of the people. But once the representatives of the League took their seats in the Assembly it would assume the character of a representative body and could carry on the work of constitution-making even if it was subsequently boycotted by the Muslim League.

It was for these reasons that Mr. Jinnah, though he had agreed to send the League's representative to the Interim Government, did not agree to its participation in the Assembly. The League's stand completely upset its opponents' calculations. The Congress started criticizing Lord Wavell for allowing the League to enter the Interim Government without simultaneously

forcing it to give a pledge to join the Constituent Assembly. Jawaharlal sent a written demand to the Viceroy for the expulsion of the League from the Interim Government if it was not willing to participate in the Assembly's work. The British Government realized that Mr. Jinnah was much too superior to Lord Wavell in intelligence. It, therefore, invited him and the other leaders along with the Viceroy to London on December 3, for a conference (December 3—6). The Labour Government after consulting its legal advisers came to the conclusion that Mr. Jinnah's stand on the question of the grouping of the provinces and the procedure for voting was right.

Statement of December 6, 1946

For the first time the Labour Government was forced to acknowledge in their official statement on December 6 that:

> Should a constitution come to be framed by a Constituent Assembly in which a large section of the Indian population had not been represented, His Majesty's Government could not of course contemplate—as the Congress have stated that they would not contemplate—forcing such a Constitution upon any unwilling parts of the country.[1]

The statement of December 6 also laid down that—

> This interpretation [the interpretation of the legal experts who supported the viewpoint of the League] must, therefore, be considered an essential part of the Scheme of May 16, for enabling the Indian people to formulate a constitution which His Majesty's Government would be prepared to submit to Parliament. It should therefore

1 Lumby, p. 128.

be accepted by all parties in the Constituent Assembly.

This statement, however, made no difference in the overall attitude of the Labour Government. The position of the Muslim League in the Government as against the Congress was still that of an opposition party. London was all out to help the Congress. Jawaharlal Nehru was the blue-eyed boy of the British Government while Mr. Jinnah was being treated as an enemy and, in spite of his apparent victory, looked aggrieved. A reporter from the powerful American weekly magazine, *Time*, searched out some interesting details of the journey and activities at London of the League and Congress leaders. He writes:

> Nehru moved about at receptions with high good humour and grace. At India House, he shook hands with the Dowager, Marchioness of Willingdon, whose husband had jailed him; at Buckingham Palace, he ate from His Majesty's gold plate, a delightful change from the tin service he had known as a nine-year guest in His Majesty's prisons. Jinnah was socially crusty, giving the impression of a man deeply aggrieved.[1]

The Constituent Assembly met on December 9, as scheduled, without the League. Mr. Jinnah declared on return from London, on December 21, that unless the Congress accepted the Cabinet statement of December 6, there could be no question of the Muslim League joining the Constituent Assembly.

On December 23, the Congress Working Committee announced that the British statement of December 6 was inconsistent with the general principles of provincial autonomy. The All-India Congress Committee also, almost finally rejected the part of the

1 Bolitho, Hector: *Jinnah, Creator of Pakistan*, p. 171.

Plan relating to compulsory grouping of the provinces. The League Working Committee, on January 31, declared that no useful purpose would be served by convening the meeting of the Council of the All-India Muslim League since the Congress had destroyed all the fundamental principles of the Cabinet Plan and every chance of compromise on that basis. It, therefore, demanded from the British Government that the Constituent Assembly be dissolved.

Wavell recalled

On February 15, Sardar Patel announced at a press conference that if the League members of the Interim Government were not immediately dismissed the Congress would go out of the government. But conditions had deteriorated to an extent that had the Viceroy dismissed his League Ministers he would have found it difficult to maintain law and order; nor could the possibility of conflict in the Army and Police be entirely ruled out.

After Calcutta, there were reports of a communal clash in Noakhali (Bengal). According to official figures, 200 persons were killed. But the Hindu press played up communal feelings to such a frenzied pitch that in Bihar, under a prepared plan, organized attacks with Police collaboration were made on the Muslims in the Hindu villages. According to Muslim League estimates, 30,000 Muslims were killed and 250,000 injured or rendered homeless. Muslim refugees numbering more than 150,000 were shifted to Bengal. Soon after, Garhmukteshar, a town in Meerut District, was the scene of another organized Hindu attack on the Muslims. Almost every Muslim, who was at the Ganges annual fair and in the neighbouring villages was

killed and the women were kidnapped. The Muslim majority areas, which were till then calm and peaceful, now reacted and in Amritsar, Multan and Rawalpindi sharp reprisals took place. The Provincial Muslim Leagues in the Punjab, Frontier and Assam were carrying on a peaceful civil disobedience movement against their respective provincial ministries. The Punjab, according to Lumby, "was still too close to civil war". He says:

> Now at last the League's policy of "direct action", proclaimed in the previous July, was officially put into operation. Evidently the Muslim masses had been won over; and in towns throughout the Punjab thousands of demonstrators defied the Ministry's bans on public meetings and processions. Since they courted arrest, the jails were soon filled to overflowing. The authorities therefore adopted the policy of imprisoning only the ringleaders; the bulk of the demonstrators were usually removed in lorries to a considerable distance and left to make their own way home. The agitation continued for more than a month, with increasing tension and more frequent incidents of violence.[1]

About the communal tension in the Punjab he writes:

> Meanwhile, however, the frenzy had spread, first to other towns, especially Multan, Amritsar and Rawalpindi, where fierce battles suddenly broke out and there whole streets were gutted by fire-raisers; and then to the countryside, especially the north-west where there was a large majority of Muslims. By March 23rd, when it was subsiding, over 18,000 Indian and 2,000 British troops had been used to help the civil authorities to bring peace to the disturbed districts of the Province.[2]

1 Lumby, p. 147. 2 *Ibid.*, p. 149.

About Assam he writes:

> As elsewhere, the movement started peacefully, but degenerated into violence. Squatters and demonstrators clashed with the police, and at the beginning of April the Government were obliged to ask for military help in case of trouble.[1]

Under these circumstances it was too risky to take a one-sided decision and dismiss the League Ministers from the Central Government. On February 20, the Labour Government announced in the House of Commons that the British Government would transfer power on June 20, 1948, either to a single Central Government, or to the existing Provincial Governments or "in such other way as may seem most reasonable and in the best interest of the Indian people". It was also announced simultaneously that Lord Wavell would be replaced by Lord Mountbatten as Viceroy in March, 1947.

Causes of Recall

The Labour Government recalled Lord Wavell in very mysterious and unusual circumstances. In spite of the constant demand of the opposition and the Press in England, the British Premier refused to divulge the reasons. John Connell, the biographer of Auchinleck, writes in this connection:

> All that Wavell had asked for was a concrete order, and the Government would not give it to him. He had put up a proposal for a long-term plan to try to reconcile Hindus and Muslims; he had put up a proposal for an ordered withdrawal to be completed in fifteen months. The Government rejected both alternatives and decided to relieve him of his office.

1 *Ibid.*, p. 152.

> There is a general feeling that the Viceroy has been rather shabbily treated and a strong feeling of regret in many quarters that he should be going.
>
> There is little comment, other than scurrilous, so far about his successor, who, in spite of his great record, is not really known to India or the Indians, which may seem strange but is, I think, true. . .
>
> In the preliminary discussions before Lord Mountbatten left for India he insisted—just as firmly as the King had insisted when he first heard of the proposal—that he be given a completely clear directive by the Prime Minister. That which Wavell had asked for in December and had been refused, was conceded to Mountbatten in March.[1]

The only explanation for the Labour Prime Minister's move could be Lord Wavell's inability to fulfil tactfully the task of handing over power to the Congress. Labour wanted to help the Congress get this power without the British Government being exposed to the charge of partiality. In fairness to Lord Wavell, he did try to instal, and in fact did instal, the Congress in power. But his tactics and methods were soon subjected to devastating analysis, in their political and legal aspects, by Mr. Jinnah. In assessing the situation Lord Wavell was outmanoeuvred by the League and had to quit. Where Wavell failed Mountbatten was to succeed—but at the cost of personal reputation, and, what is worse, after destroying the age-long traditions of British justice and fairplay.

1 John Connel: *Auchinleck*, pp. 863-4.

CHAPTER IX

WHY DID THE CONGRESS ACCEPT PARTITION ?

THE most interesting and revealing chapter in Maulana Azad's book is the one dealing with the acceptance of partition by the Congress leaders. He narrates in detail the story of his disagreement with them on this issue. According to him, Sardar Patel was the first Hindu leader to accept the idea of partition. He had realized that the League representatives in the Interim Government had completely outmanoeuvered the Congress Ministers, who in sheer desperation had become convinced that a composite Government could not work. At his very first meeting with Lord Mountbatten, therefore, Sardar Patel became a strong supporter of his Partition plan. He then discussed the question with Jawaharlal Nehru who was averse to the very idea of Pakistan. However, Mountbatten, assisted by his charming wife, and V. P. Menon, was able to persuade the Pandit to accept the scheme. In fact, the Maulana seems to suggest that it was difficult for any one to resist the charming manners of Mountbatten and his wife: Patel, Nehru, Menon and even Gandhi, all changed their views after meeting them.

The Maulana says he discussed the issue with

both Patel and Nehru. He told them that by accepting Partition they would put their seal on the soundness of Mr. Jinnah's two-nation theory which the Congress had all along opposed. To this Patel replied that whatever views one may hold the fact was that in India there were two nations which could never work in unison. Nehru agreed with him and tried to impress upon the Maulana that there was now no option but to accept Pakistan. The Maulana adds that Nehru came to his house one morning and requested him to give up opposing the demand for Pakistan and help Mountbatten in solving the problem. But the Maulana would not oblige him.

Maulana's last hope

Thus disappointed with both Patel and Nehru, the Maulana then went to Mr. Gandhi, who, according to him, was his last hope. Gandhi himself broached the question and said:

> Partition has now become a threat. It seems Vallabhbhai and even Jawaharlal have surrendered. What will you do now? Will you stand by me or have you also changed?[1]

To this the Maulana replied:

> I have been and am against partition. Never has my opposition to partition been so strong as today. I am however distressed to find that even Jawaharlal and Sardar Patel have accepted defeat and in your words, surrendered their arms. My only hope now is in you. If you stand against partition, we may yet save the situation. If you however acquiesce, I am afraid India is lost.[2]

Mahatma Gandhi said:

1 *India Wins Freedom*, p. 186. 2 *Ibid.*

> What a question to ask? If the Congress wishes to accept partition, it will be over my dead body. So long as I am alive, I will never agree to the partition of India. Nor will I, if I can help it, allow Congress to accept it.[1]

The Maulana then writes:

> Later that day Gandhiji met Lord Mountbatten. He saw him again the next day and still again on 2 April. Sardar Patel came to him soon after he returned from his first meeting with Lord Mountbatten and was closeted with him for over two hours. What happened during this meeting I do not know. But when I met Gandhiji again, I received the greatest shock of my life, for I found that he too had changed. He was still not openly in favour of partition but he no longer spoke so vehemently against it. What surprised and shocked me even more was that he began to repeat the arguments which Sardar Patel had already used. For over two hours I pleaded with him but could make no impression on him.
>
> In despondency I said at last, 'If even you have now adopted these views, I see no hope of saving India from catastrophe'.[2]

In the end, the Maulana went to Mountbatten and told him that if India were divided during his tenure of office, it would for ever be a blot on the fair name of the Labour Party. On the night of May 14, when Mountbatten was about to leave for U. K. to obtain the approval of the British Government to the partition scheme the Maulana again met him. He told him almost cajolingly that the Labour Government would not easily abandon its original plan and if the Viceroy could add his support to the Cabinet Mission

1 *Ibid.*

2 *Ibid.*, pp. 186-7.

Plan, the sub-continent could still be spared a partition. Mountbatten tried to evade a direct answer to this, merely taking the Maulana that he would bring every aspect of the problem to the notice of the Government. The Maulana writes:

> Lord Mountbatten gave me the impression that he was not going to London with a clear-cut picture of Partition, nor that he had completely given up the Cabinet Mission Plan. Later events made me change my estimate of the situation. The way he acted afterwards suggests that he had perhaps already made up his mind and was going to London to persuade the British Cabinet to accept his plan of partition.[1]

Mr. Campbell-Johnson, who was Press Attache to Lord Mountbatten, has left a diary of the day-to-day progress of events. He reveals that the details of the Pakistan scheme had been fully settled at the Governors' conference held in Delhi on April 14. Even the questions of the division of Bengal and the Punjab, a referendum in Sylhet and fresh elections in the N.-W.F.P. had been discussed at that Conference. Then, again, in the beginning of May, Lord Ismay, Political Adviser to Mountbatten, had been sent to London with the details of the partition scheme so that the authorities concerned might study them before Mountbatten's arrival there. A telegram about the British Government's approval of this draft had already been received. This had been shown to Jawaharlal on May 10, and he had raised certain objections to the wording of the draft. He insisted that the position of India *vis-a-vis* the Constituent Assembly would remain as it was in unpartitioned

1 *Ibid.*, p. 190.

India, while the Muslim League and Pakistan would be considered as new factors. This would mean that India's position in international matters would remain unaffected by division, and Pakistan would be treated as a newly born or a seceding state. In the light of this demand a fresh draft was prepared and sent to London. Since India had agreed to become a dominion in the Commonwealth, a separate draft containing her acceptance of dominion status had also been sent for approval. It is evident that the Maulana was kept completely in the dark about these important developments.

But the question is why? Why was the Maulana, who had figured quite prominently in talks with the previous Viceroys, completely ignored by Mountbatten? Why is it that his private meetings with the Viceroy do not find any place in the records? The answers to these questions are important, for, they will not only reveal Maulana Azad's real position in the Congress set-up and explain Mountbatten's inability to take him into confidence, but also enlighten us on the real circumstances under which the Congress had accepted the Pakistan scheme. In his book, the Maulana feels aggrieved over Mountbatten's attitude towards him but makes no attempt to analyse it. Perhaps, he was under the impression that Mountbatten, once he had decided upon partition, did not consider it worthwhile to discuss the matter with him, in view of his strong opposition to it. But this could not be the real reason, for we know that Patel and Jawaharlal were equally opposed to partition. Again, why did Mountbatten make no attempt to convince the Maulana with the arguments he used with Gandhi, Patel and Nehru? This leads us to the

only conclusion that *the arguments were such as could not be presented to a Muslim without offending him.* The Viceroy as well as the Hindu leaders, therefore, thought it safer to leave the Maulana alone.

Maulana Azad's explanation

But let us first try to analyse the causes which, according to the Maulana, motivated the conduct of the Hindu leaders. According to him, the main reason was, as stated above, the personal influence of Mountbatten and his wife. He speaks eloquently of the charming methods of these two: how intelligently the Viceroy could handle a problem, and how Lady Mountbatten could persuade Jawaharlal to agree to any proposal in no time.

But how did the Mahatma and Sardar Patel become so soft-hearted as to abandon their principles merely to please the Viceroy and his wife? Indeed, if Mountbatten and his wife were so powerful, they should have succeeded in securing the approval of the Congress leaders to the Cabinet Mission Plan for which the British Government was very keen. In his diary of April 5, Johnson writes about Mountbatten: "He is bending every nerve to keep the Cabinet Mission Plan alive". He wanted

> to get Congress to accept the Cabinet Mission Plan in full, and then confront Jinnah with coming in or accepting a truncated Pakistan.[1]

Then he writes:

> Mountbatten says he will try to get Gandhi to stay on and exert his influence in favour of full Congress acceptance of the Cabinet Mission Plan. He feels that, deep down, desire for union still exerts a powerful pull on Congress.[2]

1 Campbell-Johnson, p. 60. 2 *Ibid.*, p. 61.

The Viceroy, however, could not move the Congress leaders an inch towards the acceptance of the Plan. It is, therefore, obvious that the acceptance of partition by the Congress leaders was not entirely due to the personal charms of the Mountbattens. On the contrary, it seems that by sabotaging the Cabinet Mission Plan the Congress was working for some greater and more lasting gain, and, of course, with a set purpose, which it did not want to declare before the world.

Muslim League and the Central Government

Maulana Azad is of the view that Liaquat Ali Khan and other League Ministers had created such a situation for the Government and the Congress that Jawaharlal and Patel decided "to cut the head to get rid of the headache". He thinks that all efforts and schemes of the Congress having failed, Patel and Jawaharlal decided to pay any price to rid themselves of the League and so accepted the Pakistan scheme, though reluctantly.

To a great extent, the Maulana's assessment of the situation is correct. The League had, through its wonderful organization and powerful leadership, galvanized the Muslims to such an extent that they were prepared to fight on every front. An unbroken chain of successes in the various stages of the freedom struggle had raised their morale to such a pitch that if civil war had broken out in 1947 the history of the sub-continent would have been quite different. The Congress fully realized the seriousness of this danger. Moreover, the successive reverses suffered by the Congress leaders had completely demoralized the Hindu masses. So that at the time Mountbatten

assumed office the Congress found itself in the wilderness. There were dissensions in its own camp. As early as April, 1942 the Congress Party in the Madras Assembly had passed a resolution accepting the Pakistan Scheme. This was followed by Rajagopalachari's resignation from the Congress Working Committee (April 30) and later even from its primary membership. The Socialists in the Congress and the Communist Party of India openly favoured the Pakistan idea. The Congress had suffered a humiliating defeat at the Simla Conference in spite of its alliance with the Punjab reactionaries. In the general elections it had miserably failed in most of the Muslim constituencies. And by aligning itself with the Unionists who had secured only seven seats in the Punjab, it had forfeited its claim to be a progressive body. To cap it all, the League civil disobedience movement in the Punjab had forced the Congress-Unionists coalition out of power. A movement for the restoration of civil liberties under the dynamic leadership of Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan had shaken the very foundations of the Congress Ministry in the Frontier. An anti-Ghetto movement was raging full blast in Assam.

The other side of the picture

These are indisputable facts, and they all point to the weakness of the Congress in the pre-Partition constitutional fight. But the basic fact remains that the Congress leaders knew that they stood to gain everything if the Cabinet Mission's Plan was implemented. After the exit of the British, the working of the Plan as well as the framing of the Constitution would have been largely in their hands. They knew that the

groups as such could have no control or say in the matter of Defence. The Centre would control the Armed Forces and within the Centre the Congress could count upon the support of the Sikhs, the Parsis and Christians as against the Muslims. In an Independent India, the Muslim League's position would have been radically different from the one it enjoyed in the Interim Government because of the absence of a paramount third party who could always intervene and check any unilateral decisions by the majority. The smaller minorities would naturally seek their salvation by throwing in their lot with the (Hindu) majority. The Congress leaders well understood this position and subsequent events have proved that till the arrival of Mountbatten they remained firm in their opposition to partition. They were not prepared even to discuss it till then. Their acceptance of the idea of Pakistan came after they had their first series of meetings with Mountbatten. It seems obvious, therefore, that this change of attitude was not induced by their setbacks in the Interim Government or by any fear or distrust of the League. There must have been, therefore, some compelling connection between their meetings with the Viceroy and their decision to accept the division of the country.

There is yet another aspect of the situation, which requires careful scrutiny. Maulana Azad's statement shows that Gandhi had accepted the Pakistan scheme in principle as early as April 2; only the details were to be settled later. According to Maulana Azad's version the only question discussed in the Gandhi Camp after April 2 related to the shape the Partition scheme would take. The question then arises as to why Gandhiji continued giving statements

against it. Campbell-Johnson refers to this in his diary under May 6:

> Jinnah and Gandhi met for three hours at Jinnah's home in Aurangzeb Road. An agreed statement was issued, which read as follows:
>
> We discussed two matters; one was the question of division of India into Pakistan and Hindustan, and Mr. Gandhi does not accept the principle of division. He thinks that division is not inevitable, whereas in my opinion not only is Pakistan inevitable, but it is the only practical solution of India's political problem.[1]

All relevant documents indicate that by May 9, all the Congress leaders had accepted partition in principle and had unofficially conveyed their acceptance of it to the Viceroy. Why, then, were they deceiving the people by giving statements against it? Until June 2 Gandhi almost daily spoke against Pakistan in his speeches after the evening prayers. He went to the extent of inciting his audience to do what they considered best in the circumstances without caring for the advice of their leaders. As late as May 31, 1947, Mahatma Gandhi told his prayer meeting:

> Even if the whole of India burns we shall not concede Pakistan, even if the Muslims demanded it at the point of the sword.[2]

At their meeting with the Viceroy on June 3, the Quaid-i-Azam and Liaquat Ali Khan drew the Viceroy's attention to Gandhi's speeches. Sardar Patel immediately gave an assurance on behalf of the Mahatma that he would accept whatever decision was taken in the meeting.

1 *Ibid.*, p. 85. 2 Lumby, p. 161.

> Jinnah and Liaquat insinuated that Gandhi was inciting the people to do as they liked and look to other authorities than the leaders at this conference, while Kripalani retorted that all Gandhi's actions were devoted to non-violence, and Patel considered that Gandhi would abide loyally by any decision taken. Mountbatten was obliged to bring this dangerous discussion to a halt by saying he thought the subject had been ventilated sufficiently. He accepted Mr. Gandhi's special position on the one hand, and on the other was sure the Congress leaders would appreciate the point of what had been said.[1]

Obviously, Patel could not have given this guarantee without knowing Gandhi's mind on the issue. But what was the attitude of Patel and Jawaharlal themselves? Maulana Azad's statement is definite that both had agreed to partition about the end of March. But in his statement, dated April 15, Jawaharlal said:

> Congress will never accept the demand of Muslim League for Pakistan, whatever the consequences. Even if the British Government agrees to it, nothing on this earth can give the Pakistan of Jinnah's conception, not even the U.N.O.[2]

This was confirmed by Patel in these words:

> As far as the Congress is concerned it cannot make any compromise on the subject of Pakistan.[3]

Why were the Congress leaders playing this double game? Only because they were anxious to hide from the League leadership the important fact that they had changed their views on Partition under questionable circumstances. There was undoubtedly a deep-laid conspiracy between the Congress and the

1 Campbell-Johnson, p. 104. 2 *Statesman*, April 16, 1947. 3 *Ibid.*

Viceroy. In this connection Johnson's entry on April 5 is not without interest. It runs:

> Gandhi's master plan was discussed, and was described as an old kite flown without disguise. Mountbatten, however, had been the first person sufficiently intelligent to pay attention to it. The vital point was that Mountbatten should not allow himself to be drawn into negotiations with the Mahatma, but should only listen to advice.[1]

This shows that Gandhi did not fit in well with plans which were being made by Mountbatten with the help of Nehru and Patel. Actually, these two were the chief actors in the play while Gandhi was called to discussions just to provide a suitable facade to the whole plot. However, Gandhi seems to have had full confidence in Mountbatten. Johnson quotes him in his diary of April 23:

> The sole referee of what is or is not in the interests of India as a whole will be Mountbatten in his personal capacity.[2]

All these facts lend the situation a colour of secretiveness and conspiracy. It was not so simple as the Maulana would have the world believe. The real position will be discussed later, but for the present we shall discuss the attitude and outlook of Mountbatten and other British statesmen towards the idea of Partition.

Were the British Government and Mountbatten in favour of Pakistan?

Maulana Azad's assertion that every Congress leader who met Mountbatten began to support the Pakistan scheme poses the vital question whether the new Viceroy was in fact a genuine advocate of parti-

1 Campbell-Johnson, p. 55. 2 *Ibid.*, p. 71.

tion. If so, why? Had he come with positive instructions to bring about a settlement between the Hindus and Muslims on the basis of an independent Pakistan? What was his interest in canvassing the Hindu leaders in favour of Pakistan? Was he trying to help Mr. Jinnah by forcing his Pakistan down their throats. Maulana Azad holds the view that the British Government and Mountbatten were really interested in the creation of Pakistan. He writes:

> If a united India had become free according to the Cabinet Mission Plan, there was little chance that Britain could retain her position in the economic and industrial life of India. The partition of India in which the Muslim majority provinces formed a separate and independent State, would, on the other hand, give Britain a foothold in India. A state dominated by the Muslim League would offer a permanent sphere of influence to the British. This was also bound to influence the attitude of India. With a British base in Pakistan, India would have to pay far greater attention to British interests than she might otherwise do.[1]

He then goes on:

> It had for long been an open question whether India would remain in the Commonwealth after attaining her freedom. The Cabinet Mission Plan left the choice to free India. I had told Sir Stafford Cripps at the time that free India might of her own free will elect to remain in the Commonwealth. The partition of India would materially alter the situation in favour of the British. A new state formed according to the Muslim League demand was bound to remain in the Commonwealth. If Pakistan did so, India would be compelled to follow suit. All these factors

1 *India Wins Freedom*, pp. 191-2.

> must have weighed with the Labour Government. They had pledged their support for Indian freedom, but they could not forget that during the political struggle, Congress had always opposed the British and the League had always supported them. When Lord Mountbatten proposed the partition of India and the creation of a new State to satisfy the Muslim League, the proposal found a sympathetic response from many of the members of the Labour Cabinet.[1]

He thus tries to prove that the Labour Party supported partition because it wanted to reward the League for its services to the cause of British and also because it considered that a divided India would promote British interests. He says:

> The Labour Party had always sympathized with Congress and its leaders and had many times openly declared that the Muslim League was a reactionary body. Its surrender to the demands of the Muslim League was in my opinion due more to its anxiety to safeguard British interests than to its desire to please the Muslim League.[2]

This particular issue is an important one. While, on the one hand, Mountbatten is extremely unpopular with the Muslims of Pakistan, he is, on the other, supposed to have brought Pakistan into existence under British instructions. We would, therefore, like to examine this aspect of the problem before commenting upon the general policy of the British Government during the time of Lord Mountbatten to which we shall return later.

Did the British Representative have soft corner for Jinnah?

What, indeed, were the services the League had

1 *Ibid.*, p. 192.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 191.

rendered to the British which they were so anxious to reward? We have seen how candidly the Muslim League had set out its war policy and vigorously pursued it. In fact, the League leadership had placed its cards on the table in a straightforward manner: if the Muslim demand for an independent homeland was accepted the League would give all possible help to the Government in its war effort. And, when the British Government did not accept this demand, the League asked its representatives to resign from the War Council. Neither the Maulana nor any other Congressite has recorded a single incident to show that Mr. Jinnah ever tried to placate the British or blindly support their policies. Nor did he ever encourage any flattery of the British leaders howsoever highly placed. On the contrary, whenever a representative of the British Government came to the subcontinent the entire machinery of the Congress was mobilized to give him a warm welcome. When, for instance, it became known that Cripps was to bring some constitutional proposals in 1942 and again in 1946, the Hindu press embarked upon a campaign of unalloyed praise and flattery. Mr. Jinnah, on the other hand, never said a word about his personal relations with any such British emissaries. What he all along emphasized was that his people trusted in the righteousness of their own cause and were not interested in the inclinations or predilections of any particular individual. Unlike this, the Congress leaders never missed an opportunity to get near the British representatives and to befriend them. Maulana Azad himself stayed in the Government House during the days of Wavell; Jawaharlal used to be a frequent guest of the Mountbattens. But, did any important

leader of the League ever try to enjoy the Viceregal hospitality in the same measure? Again, in connection with the General Elections of 1946, Maulana Azad toured the entire sub-continent. This is what he says about the facilities provided to him by the Railways under instructions from the Viceroy:

> After the general elections were over, the question of forming the new Government arose in each province. It became necessary for me to visit the Provincial capitals and supervise the formation of the Ministries. The time at my disposal was very short but air transport helped to solve the problem. During the war, all air services had been brought under the control of the Government. They also controlled the allotment of seats. Lord Wavell issued instructions that I should be given every facility and this made it possible for me to visit all the provincial capitals.[1]

Can any instance be cited of such facilities having been provided to Mr. Jinnah? The way Gandhi and Jawahralal tried to get closer to Mountbatten and his wife is a well known fact to which the Maulana himself bears testimony. Mahatma Gandhi took Mrs. Asaf Ali along, without any prior appointment, to the Government House to introduce her to Lady Mountbatten, and thus to create friendly bonds with the Viceroy's family. Jawaharlal's whole family was busy in developing and strengthening social ties with the Mountbattens. In short, no effort was spared by these leaders to influence Cripps and Mountbatten and thus to win their support for the Hindu cause.

As opposed to this, what was Mr. Jinnah's attitude? For a fortnight (March 23 to April 6)

1 *Ibid.*, p. 127.

Mountbatten did not call him, although he had met Jawaharlal the very next day of his arrival. He had also called Gandhi on March 31. On April 6, Mr. Jinnah's meeting with Mountbatten is mentioned by Johnson in these words:

> The whole of this discussion was a form of mental exercise in preparation for Mountbatten's first vital encounter with Jinnah to-day.
>
> The morning meeting went on up to Jinnah's arrival. There were not quite so many photographers as for the first Gandhi interview, and Jinnah was obviously far more formal and reserved in his attitude to the Press. Immediately after the meeting was over I got in to see Mountbatten to have my communique approved. There was only one minor alteration.
>
> Jinnah and his sister are dining at Viceroy's House to-morrow evening, instead of to-night. The reason is simply that Mountbatten felt he could not sustain another session with him to-day. Jinnah, as he left, said he would put himself entirely at Mountbatten's disposal. Mountbatten's first reaction was, "My God, he was cold. It took most of the interview to unfreeze him.[1]

And how this interview was held is related by Johnson thus:

> In the evening I dined with the Mountbattens alone, and heard details of the remarkable interview with Jinnah, who started off the conversation quite blankly—"I will enter into discussion on one condition only". Mountbatten said, "I interrupted him before he could finish his sentence: 'Mr. Jinnah, I am not prepared to discuss conditions or, indeed, the present situation until I have had the chance of making your acquaintance and knowing more about you your-

1 Campbell-Johnson, p. 56.

> self'." Jinnah was completely taken aback by Mountbatten's attitude, and for some while did not respond, remaining reserved, haughty and aloof. But in the end his mood softened and he duly succumbed to Mountbatten's desire to hear him recount the story of the Moslem League's rise to power in terms of his own career.[1]

Whatever one may say about the rigidity of Mr. Jinnah's temperament, there can be no doubt that a supporter or flatterer of the Government would not assume this dignified attitude before the Viceroy. Without indulging in preliminary exchange of compliments or wasting time in talking about personal things, he wanted to come to the point straightaway. Could any "friend" of the British Government be so frank and formal in his dealings with the head of the administration? And was it necessary for the Viceroy to undertake a "mental exercise" before meeting a "friend".

There is unimpeachable evidence on record to show that when the partition scheme was announced in June the Viceroy and Mr. Jinnah differed radically on various issues. Mountbatten's intimacy with the Congress leaders was growing fast, but as far as Mr. Jinnah was concerned it was continuously revealed that his views were not the same as those of the Viceroy.

On May 18, 1947, Mountbatten left for U. K. with his partition scheme. Before leaving India, he tried to persuade Jinnah and Liaquat to give their formal approval to the scheme by putting their signatures on it. According to Johnson, Jawaharlal had insisted that the League leaders should be made to commit

1 *Ibid.*, p. 57.

themselves to the scheme and give an undertaking that they would not ask for more. Jinnah was equally emphatic. He told the Viceroy that while he was in agreement with the principle of the scheme he could not formally give his approval until he knew its details. And even with regard to its broad features no commitment could be made on behalf of the League Council. Under May 16, Johnson records an interesting event. He writes:

> Mountbatten has failed in his efforts to get Jinnah and Liaquat to sign the document or even a letter agreeing to it. According to him they appeared absolutely to accept its general principles, but were not willing to state their agreement in writing. V. P. said that Patel's and Nehru's main concern was that Jinnah should accept the Plan in such a way as to make it clear that it really was his last territorial demand, and not just an interim arrangement. He felt it would satisfy Congress if Jinnah made it clear that he himself accepted the announcement and would use his good offices to put it into effect.
>
> Mountbatten said that he had cautiously tested Jinnah's reaction to the threat, failing agreement, of demitting power to the Interim Government on a dominion status basis. Jinnah had apparently been very calm, and had said simply that he could not stop such a step in any event. In some respects this may well turn out to be the most delicate and decisive moment for Mountbatten's and Jinnah's diplomacy. Mountbatten felt that Jinnah's reaction was both abnormal and disturbing. It was certainly shrewd. The *ballon d'essai* has gone up and come down again, providing only the evidence that Jinnah has a very steady nerve. Mountbatten feels that Jinnah is well aware of his potency as

a martyr butchered by the British on the Congress altar.[1]

As soon as Mountbatten arrived in U. K. Jinnah gave a statement to the representative of *Reuter*. Johnson refers to this statement in his diary under May 22:

> Jinnah has dropped a carefully timed and placed bombshell. He demands an eight-hundred-mile "corridor" to link West and East Pakistan. The technique of releasing it seems to have been copied from Stalin. Doon Campbell of *Reuters*, to whom the story was given, told me that it was in answer to a questionnaire which he had lodged with Jinnah some days previously. No one was more surprised than he to find himself with such a scoop on his hands. In a telegram to Erskine Crum in London I reported, "Jinnah's answers were not verbal, but written out". As soon as *Reuters* released the story, Jinnah's secretary specially rang up foreign correspondents drawing their attention to it. Correspondents informed me privately that Jinnah offered this interview to several of them. They considered he was determined to make the statement anyhow, and merely used *Reuters*' request as a peg to hang it on. *Reuters* was, of course, a well-chosen instrument for Jinnah to exert the maximum pressure on London at this critical stage in the Viceroy's deliberations with the Government, for through the exclusive use of this source he was ensuring for himself the greatest possible coverage in the British Press.[2]

This statement perturbed the British Government to such an extent that Mountbatten had to bring a letter from Churchill in which he had said that the acceptance or rejection of the partition

1 *Ibid.*, p. 93.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 94.

scheme was a question of life and death for the Muslim League. Churchill had made an appeal for its acceptance. Johnson writes under May 31:

> He has returned armed with a vital message, which he can use at his discretion, from Mr. Churchill to Jinnah, which states that it was nothing less than a matter of life and death for Jinnah to accept the Plan.[1]

On June 2, just when the partition scheme was about to be announced Mountbatten and Jinnah again had a battle of words, because once again the Viceroy wanted Jinnah to give his formal approval to the scheme of Partition as it stood. But Mr. Jinnah would not change his stand; he simply said that he would try to get it approved by the League Council. Johnson's diary contains the following account of this incident under June 3:

> Mountbatten began the day with an early morning staff meeting, at which he told us of his dramatic midnight encounter with Jinnah. As Jinnah had categorically refused to give any answer to the Plan in writing, Ismay joined Mountbatten as a second witness of what he was ready to say. He began by reiterating at great length the remarks he had made round the conference table in the morning, and no amount of pressure from Mountbatten would make him agree to a firm acceptance from the Moslem League Council when they met. All he would undertake was that he would use his best endeavours to persuade them in a constitutional manner to accept and that his Working Committee would support him.
>
> Mountbatten then reminded Jinnah that the Congress Party were terribly suspicious of this

1 *Ibid.*, p. 97.

> particular tactic, which he always used, whereby he waited until the Congress Party had made a firm decision about some plan, and then left himself the right to make whatever decision suited the Moslem League several days later. Mountbatten warned him that Nehru, Kripalani and Patel had made an absolute point that they would reject the Plan unless the Moslem League accepted it simultaneously with themselves; and furthermore accepted it as a final settlement.
>
> Nothing Mountbatten could say would move him; he once more took refuge behind the excuse that he was not constitutionally authorized to make a decision without the concurrence of the full Moslem League Council, and pointed out that he could not in any case call this Council Meeting for several days. Mountbatten then said, "If that is your attitude, then the leaders of the Congress Party and Sikhs will refuse final acceptance at the meeting in the morning; chaos will follow, and you will lose your Pakistan, probably for good". "What must be, must be," was his only reaction, as he shrugged his shoulders.[1]

Ultimately, the procedure adopted for the announcement and implementation of the scheme accorded with the stand which Jinnah had taken. These facts which no one can challenge prove beyond doubt that there was no love lost between Jinnah and Mountbatten. In fact, they clashed on nearly every vital issue.

If Maulana Azad's theory is accepted that the British supported the demand for Pakistan on account of the League's war services, it is impossible to understand why this demand was not accepted in 1942

1 *Ibid.*, pp. 102-03.

when the Congress was almost prostrate after the failure of its "Quit India" Movement. Churchill was then in power. The Congress was silent. Almost no voice could have been raised against it if an announcement regarding partition had been made then. How was it that the British statesmen thought of their interests or of rewarding the League's services only as late as April 1947? And that the Maulana came to know of it only after his interview with Mountbatten on May 14?

Did the British have no idea of their interests at the time of the Simla Conference when their representatives were opposing the League's demand at every step? At the Conference the Government could have easily acceded to the League demand for nomination of all the Muslim representatives to the Central Government instead of Wavell's insistence on the inclusion of one Unionist in the quota of Muslims. The Glancy-cum-Khizr conspiracy against the League continued even after the Congress had softened its attitude in the matter of nomination of the Muslim members to the Central Government. Khizr Hayat was one of the biggest pillars of the British empire, and especially during the War days he exercised great influence over the Government. All the time he hatched intrigues against the League with the active connivance of the Governor. The two engineered the dismissal of Shaukat Hayat Khan, a Minister in the Punjab Cabinet in 1944, purely because of his pro-League leanings. Indeed, during the Viceroyalty of Lord Wavell the Muslim League was surrounded on all sides by formidable foes: Sir Khizr Hayat Khan (Punjab), Sir Mirza Ismail (Deccan), Sir Abdul Halim Ghaznavi (Bengal) and Sir Sultan Ahmad

(Bihar) were all actively opposing it in their respective provinces.

But, perhaps, the most remarkable instance of British hostility towards the League was the way in which it was not allowed, despite capturing 90 per cent Muslim seats, to form a government in the Punjab. About this, Lumby writes:

> Moreover the League felt that it had a right to rule in the Punjab, where 56 per cent of the population were Muslims and where the League holding 79 of the 86 seats reserved for Muslims was much the largest single party in the Legislature. After the election the League had claimed that it could count on non-Muslim support to an extent which would give it 88 seats out of a total of 175, and that it should therefore be invited to form a ministry. In consequence, it hotly resented the refusal of the Governor (Sir Bertrand Glancy) to accept this claim and his decision to summon instead the leader of the heterogeneous and hastily formed coalition, which itself commanded no more than 89 seats. This meant that the party which had scored the greatest success in the elections was kept out of office by those who had lost most heavily. . . .
>
> During the year which followed, the Government had shown every reluctance to try the strength of their uneasy alliance against the homogeneous League opposition. The Assembly had not been convened except when this was obsolutely necessary in order to pass the Budget.[1]

The magnitude of the fury and resentment of the Muslims against the Unionist Muslim Ministers can be measured by the following casual remarks of Johnson in his diary:

1 Lumby, pp. 145-6.

> The situation in the Punjab had been very tense for some time. The Muslim Coalition Prime Minister had for the past five months been compelled to move from house to house each night to avoid the threat of assassination at the hands of Muslim League.[1]

That this fear of Khizr Hayat was absolutely false and the result only of a guilty conscience since the League movement was entirely peaceful and non-violent—and that there was no underhand programme for assassinating its enemies—was proved by subsequent events and by the leniency and even generosity shown to him after Partition. It would also be interesting to note here the reactions of Johnson who was then going to be so closely connected with Government House as Press Attache to the Viceroy, to the fall of the Khizr Ministry in early 1947 as a result of the successful provincewide League agitation. He writes in March 1947:

> The Punjab was also a tragedy. Fifty years of reform and communal co-operation had been sacrificed at the altar of Muslim League fanaticism.[2]

Still more interesting are the reactions of Mr. Clement Attlee on the fall of the Unionist Ministry in the Punjab. On January 2, 1959, he said in a filmed programme meant for television:

> Jinnah destroyed the most promising joint government that was in the Punjab surrounded by very big men like Sir Sikander [Khizr?] Hayat Khan, who had Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims all working together. Jinnah set himself to wreck that.[3]

1 Campbell-Johnson, p. 32. 2 *Ibid.*, p. 33.
3 *Reuter*, January 3, 1959. Attlee was the Prime Minister when this Ministry resigned in March 1947.

In view of this varied testimony, could anyone still have any doubt about the attitude of the British towards the League?

Indeed, if the British were favourably inclined towards the League's partition demand, as is Maulana Azad's contention, the best opportunity was during the negotiations on the Cabinet Mission Plan in 1946 when Congress intransigence was at its height. But, as we know, the British Government was using its entire resources at that time to save India from division. In fact, they threatened the League that if it did not accept either the Cabinet Mission Plan as interpreted by the Congress or the truncated Pakistan, power would be entrusted to the Interim Government. This, indeed, was a unique way of safeguarding their "interests".

Johnson writes under April 8, 1947:

> Abell said the key question was: Is the Cabinet Mission Plan dead? Tell Jinnah what he will get if he refuses it. He won't be reasonable until this has been clarified.[1]

Surely this was not all to help the League or Mr. Jinnah. Again, is it not a fact that until June 3, when the League had to accept a truncated Pakistan, the Viceroy (sure of the Congress attitude because all the three alternative proposals mentioned above were to its advantage) was doubtful about the attitude of the League? If all this had been the result, as the Maulana seems to believe, of clandestine dealings between Mountbatten and the League, the agreement between the Government and the League should have preceded the agreement with the Congress. But

1 Campbell-Johnson, p. 58.

actually it was the other way round. The reason was that the League and not the Congress was a serious obstacle in the path of the British policy of maintaining the unity of India. The British Government had always, especially after the First World War and the Khilafat Movement, opposed any such scheme, which might consolidate or unite the Muslims of the world into one solid block. They did not want to encourage any scheme that might link Karachi with Constantinople. In 1932 Lord Irwin, who was Viceroy till 1931, declared in a lecture at Toronto University:

> We are trying within the Empire to foster the creation of a united India, sufficiently at one within herself in respect of those fundamentals on which every nation-State must rest, that we may devolve upon her people the power for the control of their own affairs, and the ordering of their own political life. And if the issue of what we seek to do is to reflect our aim truly and endure, this unity, at once the condition and criterion of success, must evoke not only the respect but the loyalty of an India, content and proud to realize its full destiny through imperial partnership.[1]

This policy was consistently followed by Irwin's successors till the time of Partition. Lord Birdwood, Commander-in-Chief in India till 1944, correctly describes the feelings of the British Government on the question of Partition in his book "A Continent Decides". He writes:

> If personal friendships played some part in confusing loyalties, the circumstances by which one community desired partition while the other resisted it would inevitably and naturally influ-

1 Lecture at Toronto University, 1932.

ence Englishmen who strove to rescue the semblance of unity until the last. Partition was against every instinct of the Power which had covered the land, with a common administration, a common railway system, with roads and canals which took no thought of Hindu or Moslem, and with one Army for defence. *Until the end Mountbatten struggled to retain some form of Indian unity,* and the Cabinet Mission Plan was kept before the leaders in face of such startling demands as that of Mr. Jinnah for a corridor.[1]

Another British writer, Richard Symonds, writes:

> There was no conscious British desire to create Pakistan. On the contrary, Linlithgow, who was Viceroy from 1935 to 1943, and Wavell (1943-47) repeatedly stressed the geographic and economic unity of India in their speeches.[2]

The Labour Government too pursued this policy until they were forced by circumstances to accept Partition. Mr. Symonds writes:

> H. N. Brailsford in 1943 wrote that to erect once again a cactus hedge across the peninsula would be a crime against civilization. The Rev. Reginald Sorensen, M.P., one of India's best friends in the Labour Party, considered, as late as 1947, that Pakistan was 'impossible as well as undesirable'.
>
> The Right, being until 1945 more directly concerned with the administration of India, was more cautious. Even so, L. S. Amery, who was Secretary of State for India at the time in 1941 saw 'insuperable objections' to Pakistan. Administrators and scholars were also doubtful. R. G. Casey, who had been Governor of Bengal from 1944-46, concluded that the establishment of Pakistan would be followed by a tariff war with

1 Lord Birdwood, *A Continent Decides*, p. 40.
2 Richard Symonds, *The Making of Pakistan*, p. 193.

India, in which the latter would prevail, and that Pakistan would not have sufficient international credit to raise loans. Even Sir Reginald Coupland, who made much the most careful and objective study of Pakistan before it came into being, drew among others two conclusions which have not so far been entirely justified that the heavy cost of defence in Pakistan would cause a fall in the standard of living, and that a large scale exchange of population with India would be impossible.

Nor were American writers more prescient than the British. Mr. John Gunther thought in 1939 that Mr. Jinnah had 'all but ruined his position by adopting a fierce separatism'. Miss Kate Mitchell, writing in 1943, was frankly hostile to the Muslim League and to the idea of Pakistan. Robert Aura Smith of the New York *Times*, in a detailed study of the political events of 1946-47, believed that if Pakistan were created, its foreign policy would be dictated from Cairo.[1]

According to John Connel, soon after the arrival of Mountbatten a tussle started in the Interim Government about the proposals of the constitution for free India. Liaquat Ali Khan wanted to get a plan for the Partition of the Army approved by the Government. But the Viceroy, the Defence Minister and the Commander-in-Chief were opposed to such a move. He writes:

Liaquat was too alert, too resolute and too well versed in the conduct of affairs to walk into a trap, even if it were neatly baited. He prepared a short and formidable document headed boldly: 'Preparation of plan for the partition of the Indian Armed Forces'. . .

. . . For the question of the division of the Armed Forces was the crux of the whole debate.

1 *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

If this fundamental point of principle were to be conceded, then the emergence of an independent Pakistan must inevitably follow. Liaquat's proposition was a rapier thrust at the very heart of the idea of a unitary India.

Auchinleck presented his views on Liaquat's paper to the Defence Member on April 20. He was robustly and unequivocally opposed to the Finance Member's suggestion, not on any grounds of affection towards Hindus rather than Muslims, but for sheer military and administrative reasons. He began his *aide memoire* with the round statement:

"The Armed Forces of India, as they now stand, cannot be split up into two parts, each of which will form a self-contained Armed Force".

He supported this assertion with a wealth of sheer hard, factual knowledge about the state and composition of the Indian Army, the R.I.N. and the R.I.A.F. and concluded:

". . . . The formation of two separated Armed Forces is not just a matter of redistributing certain classes of men. It is a matter of the greatest complexity and difficulty, not only the preliminary planning stages but also, and more particularly, in the practical means of bringing any such plan into being.

Any such drastic reorganization would have to be carried out in stages over a period of several years, and during this period there would be no cohesive Armed Force capable of dealing with any serious defensive operations on the North-West Frontier".[1]

The author writes on the reply of Auchinleck:

Auchinleck's view was both wider and less naive. It did not hold out much hope for Pakistan.

1 Connel, pp. 874-6.

Michael Breacher in his political biography of Nehru also admits very frankly that "the British officers generally were opposed to the division of the Armed Forces. . ."[1]

All of which goes to prove conclusively that the British had no soft corner for the Muslim League, nor were they in any way willing to concede its demand for Pakistan, unless forced by circumstances. By 1946, the League had grawn so high in stature that in spite of their best efforts the British Government as well as the Congress could not afford to ignore it and had to seek its co-operation.

Maulana Azad has, however, deliberately ignored this aspect of the political situation and our grievance against him is that in order to cover up his own helplessness and ineffectiveness, which was so manifest during the period of negotiations between the last Viceroy and the Congress, he chose to dub Jinnah as a supporter of the British, while he was fearlessly and courageously fighting his adversaries on every front on a high and dignified level. Neither the Maulana nor any other Congress leader has referred even to a single incident where the Quaid-i-Azam had collaborated with the British against India's national interests or where the British Government had supported the League even though it were to their own advantage. On the contrary, the Quaid-i-Azam lent his full support to his compatriots whenever the question of broader interest of the people of the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent was involved. In 1945, for instance, in spite of his differences with the Congress leaders he extended his unqualified assistance to them in the matter of defending prisoners of the Indian

1 Michael Breacher, *Nehru—A Political Biography*, p. 350.

National Army under Bose. Johnson refers to this incident in these words:

> For once Congress and the Moslem League are on the same side of the fence. One or two of the I. N. A. men in question were Moslems. Although the Muslim League had been careful to avoid identifying itself with the Congress Civil Disobedience policy of 1942 or any direct challenge to the Allied war effort, it was significant that as soon as there was any suggestion that the issue was one involving national aspirations, their differences with the Congress vanished at once.[1]

The question of the postponement of India's freedom

The leaders of the Congress had always propagated the idea that their first objective was to win freedom for India; all other questions were subsidiary to it. They pretended that their opposition to the demand of the League was due to the fact that it would prove an obstacle in the path of freedom. But today unimpeachable evidence is available to prove that these fears were altogether baseless and devoid of reality. As the moment of India's freedom approached and the claims of the two major parties were put to a test, the Congress leaders pressed for its postponement because they feared that the Muslims would also benefit by it.

Maulana Azad who was ready to pay any price for killing the Pakistan scheme gave his consent to the proposal that the question of India's freedom should be postponed for two or three years. On the other hand, Mr. Jinnah never accepted this proposal although it was placed before him by the Viceroy.

1 Campbell-Johnson, p. 53.

Maulana Azad says that Lord Wavell wanted to postpone the question of freedom till a solution of the communal problem was found, but Mr. Attlee did not agree. He writes:

> If Lord Wavell's advice had been followed and the solution of the Indian problem deferred for a year or two, it is possible that the Muslim League would have got tired of its opposition. Even if the League had not taken a more positive attitude, the Muslim masses of India would probably have repudiated the negative attitude of the Muslim League. It is even possible that the tragedy of Indian partition might have been avoided. One cannot say for certain, but a year or two is nothing in the history of a nation. Perhaps history will decide that the wiser policy would have been to follow Lord Wavell's advice.[1]

During Lord Mountbatten's term of office as Viceroy the Congress accepted the proposal for partition, but the Maulana made a last attempt to have the question postponed. Even Gandhi was in agreement with him at one stage. He says:

> Before Gandhiji left for Patna, I made a last appeal to him. I pleaded with him that the present state of affairs might be allowed to continue for two years. *De facto* power was already in Indian hands and if the *de jure* transfer was delayed for two or three years, this might persuade the League to come to a settlement for reasons I have already mentioned in the last chapter. Gandhiji himself had suggested this a few months ago and I reminded him that two or three years is not a long period in a nation's history. If we waited for two or three years, the Muslim League would be forced to come to terms. I realized that if a decision was taken now,

1 *India Wins Freedom*, p. 178.

> partition was inevitable, but a better solution might emerge after a year or two. Gandhiji did not reject my suggestion but neither did he evince any enthusiasm for it.[1]

This statement of Maulana Azad makes two things clear. Firstly, that the Congress leaders were prepared to have the question of India's freedom postponed in order to deprive the Muslims of their share in it. Mr. Jinnah had told Mountbatten in his very first meeting that the Congress "would accept anything to deprive me of Pakistan". Later events showed that what he told the Viceroy was the bare truth.

Secondly, that Mahatma Gandhi seemed to have been completely satisfied with the talks he had with the Viceroy and Patel. In spite of the fact that Maulana Azad reminded him of his previous views on the Pakistan question he could not find them to be of any interest to him. This meant that he was satisfied with the picture of Pakistan as it was presented to him, but that he was not prepared to disclose to Maulana Azad anything in that connection. We shall discuss these secret plans later; for the present we propose to confine our comments to the background of the attitudes of the leaders in the two camps.

It would be of some interest to know the reaction of Mr. Jinnah to the proposal regarding the postponement of the question of India's freedom. After his consultations with Menon and the Congress leaders the Viceroy had made the offer of a truncated Pakistan to the Quaid-i-Azam. Both Menon and Mountbatten believed that Jinnah would reject the offer. Johnson writes under May 7:

1 *Ibid.*, p. 188.

> Mountbatten said he had always borne in mind the possibility of rejection by Jinnah, and in all the interviews he had had both with him and Liaquat he had watched carefully for any sign pointing to such an intention, but none had been given. Every test he had applied led him to the belief that they intended to accept, and he could see only two possible suppositions for Jinnah not doing so—the first, if his real aim was to keep the British in India, and by prolonging the bargaining to make it more difficult for the British to leave, in the hope of obtaining thereby a more favourable award; the second, if he had reached the conclusion that Pakistan was not practicable.
>
> But he seriously doubted whether either of these considerations was in Jinnah's mind.[1]

Had the position been otherwise and had the Quaid-i-Azam given even a hint that the question of India's freedom should be postponed the entire Hindu press would have come out with concocted stories about his reactionary stand. It would have slandered him, condemned him and said all sorts of things about the League's policy. However, in the face of this unimpeachable evidence it would be absurd to think even for a moment that Mr. Jinnah was serving the interests of the British or that the latter were helping the League.

Dominion Status

The Maulana's statement that the British wanted to use the Pakistan scheme as a means of prolonging their stay in the sub-continent and thereby force the Congress to accept Dominion Status for India, is contradicted by facts. The truth is, as we have discussed

1 Campbell-Johnson, p. 86.

in the earlier chapters, that the Congress never wanted complete independence for India. In 1920 when Maulana Hasrat Mohani moved a resolution for complete Independence in the Ahmadabad Session of the Congress, it was emphatically opposed by Gandhi. He opposed it because of his fear that as soon as the British left the sub-continent the tribesmen and Muslim States would swoop down upon it and conquer it in no time. India should therefore obtain only that kind of freedom which would be protected by British bayonets.

The Nehru Report which was published in 1928 was a mirror of the Congress mind on this issue; it also advocated freedom for India only under British guardianship. In 1930 the Congress had to pass a resolution on complete independence because the British Government had rejected the Nehru Report in spite of all the threats and baits offered by the Congress. In connection with the Cripps' proposals, Maulana Azad openly declared on behalf of the Congress that India would continue to be a member of the British Commonwealth even after independence. Again, even before a formal agreement over the Pakistan scheme was reached the Congress leaders—Patel and Nehru—and Menon had assured Mountbatten that India would stay in the Commonwealth provided that the words "Emperor" and "Empire" did not appear in its official documents. These promises had been given in the hope that the League would reject the offer of a moth-eaten Pakistan and the British would in that case entrust power in undivided India to the Congress. It is to be especially noted that the Congress had agreed to India remaining in the Commonwealth whether Pakistan was conceded

to the Muslims or not. Writes Mr. Johnson:

> We also went further into the possibilities of retaining India in the Commonwealth, and V. P. confirmed both Patel's and Nehru's positive approach to the subject and the need for dropping the terms "King-Emperor" and "Empire", to which so many Indians objected. V. P. was finally asked to prepare a paper setting out clearly the procedure whereby a form of Dominion Status could be granted to India under the alternative Plans of Partition and Demission.[1]

V. P. Menon records the intentions and views of Patel and other Congress leaders in his book *Transfer of Power in India* on the question of 'Dominion Status' in the following words:

> I was keeping Vallabhbhai Patel informed of the developments in Simla and he was delighted by the turn of events. He assured me that there would be no difficulty in the Congress accepting Dominion Status. In fact, he had already made a statement on 9 May, suggesting that power should be transferred to the Indian Government on the basis of Dominion Status, with the Viceroy standing out.[2]

Probably Maulana Azad was kept in the dark as far as these developments were concerned. By the time, he was compiling his book, he must have, however, seen the relevant documents and it is, therefore, surprising that he should connect the creation of Pakistan with Britian's anxiety to continue to hold power in India. Was it really in its own interest that the British Government agreed to the Partition of the sub-continent?

1 *Ibid.*, p. 86.
2 Menon, V. P., *Transfer of Power in India*, p. 365.

If it is true that the British persuaded the Congress leaders to accept the partition scheme because of their own interests, then a number of questions arise. Firstly, we should find out, again, as to why Patel, Nehru and Gandhi agreed to play into the hands of the British. Their only objective was to secure and safeguard Hindu interests. Therefore, they must have accepted the British proposal for the division of India as the fulfilment of their own objective.

Secondly, if, according to Maulana Azad, Pakistan had been created by the British to use it as a stepping stone to perpetuate or prolong its stay in the sub-continent, they should have made it as strong as possible. But, as is now a well-known fact, Attlee and Mountbatten did everything they could to strengthen India at the cost of Pakistan. And in spite of the fact that Pakistan, according to the Cabinet Mission, was not economically viable, the Labour Government further weakened it by transferring some Muslim majority areas to India and depriving it of Kashmir and the canal waters, which were so indispensable for it. Moreover, as we shall see in detail in the next chapter, Mountbatten exercised his pressure on Hyderabad, Junagadh and 600 other princely states and almost forced them to accede to India. If the British really wanted to help their allies and friends in India, then the ruling princes, who went all-out to support them in war, with men, money and material, should have been the first to be supported against the domination of Congress over India. If they just desired, big states like Hyderabad, Mysore, Baroda, Bhopal and Indore could be encouraged to be directly or through a union of Indian States affiliated to the Commonwealth. Some of the states

did make frantic efforts to create a third block in India. But the Labour Government gave them no encouragement.

The reason is not far to seek. The Labour Party wanted a settlement with the Congress. They, besides having a sense of oneness with the Congress in economic and political programme, considered it a progressive and powerful party and the best party with which to make alliance in India. That was not the time for showing consideration for past services or for trying to prolong their stay in India. Their crucial need at the termination of war, when Britain had become a third-rate world power, was to boost up the waning influence of their empire by strengthening their friendly ties with India, which they thought to be the biggest power in Asia. They ignored the States and, if they could, would have first thrown the Muslim League also overboard. But the unity and strength of the Muslims frustrated their plans. They, however, left no stone unturned in making India a great power.

These unwise actions of Mountbatten made him an object of hatred in Pakistan. In 1957 when he wanted to pay a visit to this country the people and the press opposed it so vehemently that the Government had to take notice of it, and he had to drop the idea of coming here. On the other hand, in India he became so popular that the Hindus demonstrated their feeling of gratitude and affection to him on August 15, 1947, when he drove in state from the Council House after the ceremony of unfurling the national flag. Johnson describes this in these words:

> The Mountbattens' drive home was only the second of several tumultuous rides during the

day, and all the way back to Government House the cries of "Jai Hind" were mixed with "Mountbatten Ki Jai", and even "Pandit Mountbatten".[1]

Along with this demonstration of mutual feelings of regard and gratitude between Mountbatten and the Bharatis, let us recall Attlee's statement on the television on January 2, 1959, in which he criticized the Quaid-i-Azam describing him as "dandish and extremely westernised". In the television programme he told his interviewer, Francis William, that "he never liked the late Mr. Jinnah of Pakistan". Asked why he disliked him, Earl Attlee replied: "I do not think he was very genuine. He was first a hanger of the Congress far from being a good Muslim. He had married a Parsee". As was only natural this raised widespread protest all over the country. The Government of Pakistan had to lodge a formal protest against the impertinence of the British ex-Premier, and the British Government was obliged to offer an apology. Ultimately, this statement was buried under widespread feelings of contempt and disgust for its author. But can any honest man dare to say after this statement that Attlee's Government was supporting the demand for Pakistan? On the other hand, it reveals that in spite of the openly hostile attitude of Attlee and Mountbatten the League was able to win Pakistan because it had become impossible for the Labour Party to resist it. Mountbatten and the Labour Government, however, did succeed in their designs to weaken Pakistan.

1 Campbell-Johnson, p. 159.

CHAPTER X

THE ANGLO-HINDU CONSPIRACY

Lord Mountbatten, the last Viceroy of India, arrived in New Delhi on March 22, 1947, to transfer power to the people of the sub-continent. He was given a clear directive by the Labour Government to make efforts to keep the unity of India intact. The directive was as follows:

> It is the definite objective of His Majesty's Government to obtain a unitary Government for British India and the Indian States, if possible within the British Commonwealth, through the medium of a Constituent Assembly, set up and run in accordance with the Cabinet Mission's Plan, and you should do the utmost in your power to persuade all parties to work together to this end, and advise His Majesty's Government in the light of developments as to the steps that will have to be taken.
>
> Since, however, this plan can only become operative in respect of British India by agreement between the major parties, there can be no question of compelling either major party to accept it.
>
> If by October 1 you consider that there is no prospect of reaching a settlement on the basis of a unitary government for British India, either

> with or without the co-operation of the Indian States, you should report to His Majesty's Government on the steps which you consider should be taken for the handing over of power on the due date.[1]

What the alternative proposal was is revealed by Campbell-Johnson in his diary under May 7:

> None the less he [Mountbatten] agreed with V. P.'s thesis on the advisability of having available a clear alternative in his dealings with Jinnah. The second-line plan would involve demission of power under the present constitution. It would not in the last resort require the agreement of the Indian leaders. Provincial subjects would be demitted to existing Provincial Governments, and Central subjects to the existing Central Government; but it would put the Moslems under the Hindu majority.[2]

Thus soon after assuming office, Mountbatten started devising plans in consultation with Patel and Menon. He was dealing with Hindu officials and leaders not in his capacity as an impartial arbitrator, but as their friend and ally. How he persuaded the Congress leaders to accept his advice and how he made common cause with them is evident from the following account given by Maulana Azad:

> Another consideration probably weighed with Sardar Patel. Lord Mountbatten had argued that Congress had agreed to a weak Centre only in order to meet the objection of the League. Provinces were therefore given full provincial autonomy, but in a country so divided by language, community and culture, a weak centre was bound to encourage fissiparous tendencies. If the Muslim League were not there, we could plan

1 Menon, p. 351.

2 Campbell-Johnson, p. 86.

> for a strong Central Government and frame a constitution desirable from the point of view of Indian unity. Lord Mountbatten advised that it would be better to give up a few small pieces in the north-west and the north-east and then build up a strong and consolidated India. Sardar Patel was impressed by the argument that co-operation with the Muslim League would jeopardize Indian unity and strength. It seemed to me that these arguments had influenced not only Sardar Patel but Jawaharlal also. The same arguments repeated by Sardar Patel and Lord Mountbatten had also weakened Gandhiji's opposition to partition. Lord Mountbatten said that since partition was on the basis of Muslim majority areas and since both in Bengal and the Punjab there were areas where the Muslims were in a clear minority, these provinces should also be partitioned. He however advised the Congress leaders not to raise the question at this stage and assured us that he would himself raise it at the appropriate time.[1]

These words make it abundantly clear that the Viceroy treated the Quaid-i-Azam almost as an adversary. The Quaid-i-Azam was to be confronted with a dilemma. He must accept a truncated Pakistan with Bengal and Punjab divided, or agree to the Cabinet Mission Plan with the preposterous interpretations put on its grouping clause by the Congress. This offer was accompanied by the threat that power would be transferred to the Congress by June 20, 1948, if the League did not accept either alternative. Mountbatten went out of his way to console the Congress leaders that a Pakistan shorn of strategic territories in the north-east and north-

1 *India Wins Freedom*, p. 187-8.

west would not mean much and they need not be worried over its creation under these handicaps. They were also advised not to raise the question of division of the Punjab and Bengal; "he himself would raise it at the appropriate time".

The abovementioned statement of Maulana Azad clearly reveals how Mountbatten had become a party to the conspiracy of the Hindu leaders, led by Patel. There can be no doubt that he had acquainted them with his plans regarding the division of the Punjab and Bengal. The Cabinet Mission Plan had indicated, on the basis of facts and figures, that after the division of these two provinces Pakistan would not be able to sustain itself economically for a long period. When the Congress leaders were informed that only certain small slices would be given to Pakistan, which could not be viable economically they were fully convinced of the early demise of Pakistan.

Date of transfer of power brought nearer

To accelerate this expected demise, the date of the transfer of power was brought nearer by nearly ten months. The scheme of substituting June 20, 1948, by August 14/15, 1947, was devised with a definite purpose. It was obvious that the complicated procedure of transferring power could not be gone through within the short period of two months and a half. Of the two dominions, India was not likely to be very much affected by this haste. It would have for its share of the army self-contained and well-organized units of the Gurkhas, the Sikhs and other Hindu regiments, and most of the military stores and equipment were also stationed at places within its territories. The Muslim units of the army, on the other

hand, were not complete, because these had never been formed on community basis; they were either provincial or racial in their composition. Consequently, it would take the Muslim dominion of Pakistan some time to organize its forces, and the transfer of military stores within ten weeks would be practically impossible. Obviously the time-limit for the transfer of power was kept short to force Pakistan to start with a scratch. The new state would have no organized forces or equipment; a general massacre of Muslims would push large populations of refugees into its territory, thus strangulating it economically.

The plot was soon put into effect. A general massacre of Muslims was started in Delhi, Rajputana and the Punjab. On August 14, the Pakistani leaders were more or less like landless Nawabs. They were given charge of a new country with no means of defence, and with borders undefined. India seized Junagadh, raped Hyderabad and usurped Kashmir. The Pakistan leaders were helpless and could not save these states from the encroachments of the aggressor. Railway trains carrying the luggage of Government servants were burnt on their way to Pakistan; Pakistan's money in the Indian banks was frozen, and in April 1948, the canal water flowing into its territories was also stopped. All this was the result of a deep-laid conspiracy and the Congress leaders' hypocritical acceptance of Pakistan. Mr. Lumby writes:

> Then came the charge that India was deliberately trying to swamp Pakistan with Muslim refugees from India in order to bring about her economic breakdown—a charge which Indian Ministers were at pains to refute by asserting

that no compulsion was being used to force Muslims to leave India; although, as had been agreed, the mass exchange of population between the two Punjabs was being organized, while those in other Provinces who wished to migrate to Pakistan were being helped to do so as far as possible. The leaders of Pakistan seem to have been genuinely afraid that their new State was in danger of being strangled at birth, and that every move on the part of India was deliberately aimed at her destruction. Liaquat Ali Khan asserted that Pakistan was "surrounded on all sides by forces which were out to destroy her"; and Jinnah more than once spoke of her as the victim of a deep-laid and well-planned conspiracy.[1]

He continues:

> Again the Government of India were hestitating to fulfil the partition agreements for fear that by so doing they would be supplying Pakistan with the means to wage war against them. Thus before the year was out they were threatening to hold up the payment of fifty-nine crores of rupees (some 44 million pounds) which had become due to Pakistan under the recent financial agreement.[2]

Major-General Muhammad Akbar Khan (Retired), who took over as Commander of Karachi and adjoining areas in August 1947, has given us in a recent article a graphic account of the state of Pakistan's armed forces at the time of its birth. Speaking of the havoc wrought by his predecessor, he writes:

> Thanks to bad staff work of my predecessor, a British General, all the Ordnance Depots were completely empty, for he had allowed all ammunition, war stores and vehicles, etc. to go to India.

1 Lumby, p. 196. 2 *Ibid.*, p. 201.

> They had even commenced demolishing the barracks in Malir Cantonment but I stopped it. Was it a wilful sabotage? The military hospitals had been ransacked. The buildings were there to show what magnificent institutions they must have been when they were in use. While I was inspecting the dockyards reserved for military stores, I found small arms ammunition being loaded in lorries. On inquiry I found that they were being loaded to be shipped and later dumped into the sea. I cancelled the orders and thus saved 30,000,000 cartridges for the rifles. I was also told that twice as much had already been sunk—at a time when we could get no ammunition from U.K. and India had refused to let us have our share.[1]

The unexpected and abrupt announcement of the change of schedule of the transfer of power surprised everyone interested in the development. In this connection, the well-known British Parliamentarian, and an ex-Commander-in-Chief of India, Lord Birdwood, writes:

> A few days later we were to learn that 15th August had been fixed as the day on which power would pass. There was thus left just under two and a half months in which to complete the greatest political and administrative operation in history. The dividing of resources, of the Civil Service and, alas, of a great Army, had to be driven forward at a speed which, though it commanded admiration as conveying to all concerned a sense of vitality, inevitably resulted in the emergence of the new State of Pakistan in the utmost confusion.[2]

John Connell records:

> On April 25, with 1 June, 1948, firmly in his

1 *Dawn*, Independence Day Supplement, August 14, 1960.
2 Lord Birdwood, p. 34.

mind as the earliest possible date for the transfer of power, Mountbatten had warned the Defence Committee of India, in the most solemn and explicit terms, that by hastening the process of separation of the Armed Forces they might defeat their own ends and produce a situation in which the Forces might be semi-organized and not reliable, and had said that he could not possibly accept the weakening of the Army, the R. I. N. and the R. I. A. F. so long as he remained responsible for law and order. This was on the evening of 25th April, 1947. What happened between then and 15th August, 1947 totally to invalidate these assumptions and expose them as mocking and delusive?

Then he goes on to say:

On May 9 he had come to regard 31 December, 1947, as a practicable date for the termination of British. . . . Prodigious, all consuming haste thereafter became the dominant characteristic of this astonishing and momentous operation. It had taken more than two centuries to build up the Indian Empire, and to give to the sub-continent a unitary political and constitutional structure. The whole structure was demolished in exactly two and a half months.

Mountbatten and Auchinleck returned to Delhi on May 31. Mountbatten's arguments in London, added to those of Ismay and Abell, had convinced the British Government that the most rapid and drastic solution was the only solution.[1]

In reference to Ismay it may be pointed out here incidentally that he considered the partition of Armed Forces as "the biggest crime and the biggest headache".[2]

Describing the three-day visit of Field-Marshal

1 John Connell, *Auchinleck*, pp. 885-6. 2 Campbell-Johnson, p. 137.

Lord Montgomery and his views on the post-haste arrangement of transfer of power, Mr. Connell writes:

> On this troubled scene there arrived, on June 23, for a three-day visit to India, the new C. I. G. S., Field-Marshal Lord Montgomery. He was markedly ignorant of India and Indian conditions. Although he was splendidly entertained by the Viceroy, and had conversations with both Nehru and Jinnah, it cannot be said that his intervention was helpful or constructive.
>
> Montgomery noted in his diary on June 24 that partition at such a speed raised terrific problems, and prophesied that if these were not settled by the closest co-operation between the two Dominions, there would be "the most awful chaos and much bloodshed". He was quite right; but so were those who, with much more knowledge, experience and insight, had been making the same sombre prophecy for months past, and had been trying to bring about that co-operation. Montgomery merely formed the impression (and recorded it) that Jinnah had an intense distrust of Auchinleck and hated Mountbatten.[1]

The whole pattern of events is suggestive of very strong and deep conspiracy. The causes of the change of the date have not been disclosed by any British writer or politician so far except that Mountbatten was able to convince the Labour Government that a drastic surgical operation was the only remedy. Mr. Connell thus brings forth this aspect in his book:

> A delicate and elaborate operation which it ought to have taken at least a year to perform had to be hustled through in under two months.
>
> The motive power behind the relentless

1 Connell, p. 889.

speed which characterized the British withdrawal from India was Mountbatten's. He believed and he had convinced the British Government that this was the only way in which it could be done. He also believed that only the shock of realizing that the British were going, and going at once, would bring the opposing sides in India to face the consequences and accept their own responsibilities.

A Punjabi, a magistrate grown old in the British service, observed sadly in the autumn of 1947:

"The British are a just people. They have left India in exactly the same state of chaos as they found it".[1]

Mountbatten was not unaware of the Hindu and Sikh plans for the massacre of Muslims in East Punjab, Rajputana and Delhi which were to be put into operation from August 15. Johnson expressed his apprehensions about this as early as July 1. On May 14, Mountbatten had told Maulana Azad in clear terms that he would do his best to prevent killings, using tanks and aeroplanes also, if necessary. The Maulana writes:

> I also asked Lord Mountbatten to take into consideration the likely consequences of the partition of the country. Even without partition, there had been riots in Calcutta, Noakhali, Bihar, Bombay and the Punjab. Hindus had attacked Muslims and Muslims had attacked Hindus. If the country was divided in such an atmosphere, there would be rivers of blood flowing in different parts of the country and the British would be responsible for the carnage.
>
> Without a moment's hesitation Lord Mount-

1 *Ibid.*, pp. 887-8.

batten replied: 'At least on this one question I shall give you complete assurance. I shall see to it that there is no bloodshed and riot. I am a soldier, not a civilian. Once partition is accepted in principle, I shall issue orders to see that there are no communal disturbances anywhere in the country. If there should be the slightest agitation, I shall adopt the sternest measures to nip the trouble in the bud. I shall not use even the armed police. I will order the Army and the Air Force to act and I will use tanks and aeroplanes to suppress anybody who wants to create trouble.[1]

Similar assurances had been given to the League leaders and its representatives in the Interim Government. Connell attributes to the Viceroy the following statement which, according to him, Mountbatten made in the meeting of the Defence Committee on April 25, 1947:

> I bear personal responsibility for law and order. I must carry this until such time as I can hand it over to one or more responsible authorities. While I bear that responsibility I have, in the last resort, the use of British troops to fall back on. After 1 June, 1948, there will be no British troops. But the need for reliable and impartial armed forces may still exist.

He adds:

> He threw out a suggestion that the forces of Hindustan and Pakistan might be pooled. Each could have its own G. H. Q., and there could remain a Federal G. H. Q. in general control until such time as separation could be completed without detriment to efficiency.[2]

But when the killings commenced and thousands of Muslims were forced to go to refugee camps from

1 *India Wins Freedom*, p. 107.

2 Connell, p. 879.

where they were to be pushed into Pakistan the Viceroy did nothing; he played the role of a silent spectator. When on August 14, his attention was drawn in Karachi by the Refugee Minister to the massacre of Muslims in East Punjab he simply remarked, "the law will take its own course".

Was this indifference of Mountbatten the result of his disappointment on not being accepted by the League as the first Governor-General of Pakistan? one may well ask.

Connell advances the theory that Mountbatten was a helpless spectator to all the post-partition events in India. He writes:

> The original proposal that, after August 15, he, the last Viceroy, should remain as Governor-General of both Dominions had been sensible; in his own person, though in no sense as a representative of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, he would have retained an impartial status and authority. But long before Partition he had lost the trust of Jinnah and the Muslim League. When Jinnah refused to accept him as Governor-General of Pakistan and took the post himself, Mountbatten's position was untenable. As Governor-General of India alone he could no longer exert any truly impartial influence. He became at once a constitutional monarch, and not an international—or rather, supranational—arbiter.[1]

Whatever be the cause of this indifference there can be no doubt that Mountbatten could have easily stopped the massacre of innocent Muslims by threatening to resign. And this was perhaps necessary for the head of a dominion in view of the deteriorating relations between two countries within the British

1 *Ibid.*, pp. 912-13.

Commonwealth. Patel could not have had the courage of defying him at that stage. The following statement of Quaid-i-Azam's A. D. C., Colonel Burny, throws ample light on this issue. He writes in his diary on August 29:

> Atrocities on both sides have been terrible in the last fortnight; the greatest danger has existed in the fact that so many people on both sides have panicked and made things worse. There are thousands of refugees of both communities in camps, both in India and Pakistan, whose homes have been burnt to the ground and who have lost everything they possess. It is this complete distrust of each other that is the most serious aspect of the whole situation.
>
> Three brigades of British troops would be sufficient to hold the balance and keep the peace, but, unfortunately, this is no longer possible. . . .
>
> Attacks on trains have increased, chiefly organized by the Sikhs. Harrington Hawes . . . had a very narrow escape when his train was derailed. After making their way, on foot, to the nearest railway station, the train was looted by 200 Sikhs who had previously killed the entire staff of the station. He managed to get most of the passengers on to the roof of the station where, 24 hours later, they were rescued by a relief train.[1]

Instead of employing "two brigades" to crush Sikh marauders the Indian Army was let loose on defenceless and innocent Muslims. There was a Boundary Force commanded by Lord Auchinleck but no orders were issued to it to save innocent people from the savage butchery of the Hindus and Sikhs. A force of fifty thousand soldiers and ten thousand

1 Quoted in Bolitho, p. 204.

armed policemen was sent to the Punjab to stop the killings, but no one knows what had happened to it. Lord Birdwood writes:

> In fact, Field-Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck was appointed Supreme Commander from 15th August, answerable to a joint Defence Council consisting of himself, the two Governors-General and the two Defence Ministers. But he was given no responsibility for law and order, with only operational control over troops in transit. In an extension of his powers of command together with the allocating of his final responsibility to an authority outside India lay the only hope of smooth transition. We are told that both sides insisted on military independence as a condition of settlement. Such independence would eventually have come, and it would have been worth risking some harsh words to have answered insistence with equal determination. A Boundary Force arrived. In effect it was the 4th Indian Division hurried up from the south of India. But it found itself involved in a task for which it was quite inadequate, and it was hardly fair to expect Indian soldiers to remain immune from communal sentiment when so closely associated with it on the spot.
>
> The whole pattern of development can really be traced back to the decision to squeeze the administrative headache of partition into about seventy-five days. Circumstances had to fit into a plan rather than a plan be adjusted to the circumstances. The question we ask, therefore, hardly concerns such considerations as to whether portions of the British Army could or could not have been placed under the orders of either the Governor of East and West Punjab or the two Governors-General; since we maintain that no constitutional or administrative difficulty,

however uncompromising, should have been allowed to stand in the way of a plan so vital to a peaceful partition. The real issue, then, narrows down to whether or not chaos in the Punjab could and should have been predicted. The orgy of slaughter did not break upon us as a sudden elimination of human control. It had been smouldering and gathering force for many months all over the land. Was it not clear that it would approach its climax so soon as the Radcliffe Award was known?[1]

Later. he says:

But there is one aspect of the Radcliffe Award which calls for comment; and that is the timing of its publication. Independence Day was deliberately avoided, and the verdicts for both Bengal and the Punjab were made known a day later, on 16th August.

The fact that the final demarcation of these very controversial frontiers was not announced until the day after they should have been recognized indicates the complete absence of any conception of an operation involving population exchanges. With communal tension increasing all over the country, ever since the Moslem League's instructions for "Direct Action" in August 1946, it might have been anticipated that the act of partition would hasten the tempo. Could it not have been foreseen that the motives of primitive fear and revenge gripping millions in Pakistan and India would drive the minority communities to seek shelter in the land across the border which they identified with the safety of their own religious persuasion?[2]

Connell's account is as follows:

In India that sense of greatness which Nehru in his spocalyptic moment apprehended in little

1 Lord Birdwood, pp. 37-8. 2 *Ibid.*, p. 38.

men, swiftly vanished, and they were back in their shabby garment of littleness—shabby and drenched with blood. . .[1]

On August 15 the day of liberation was strangely celebrated in the Punjab. During the afternoon a Sikh mob paraded a number of Muslim women naked through the streets of Amritsar, raped them and then hacked some of them to pieces with *kirpans* and burned the others alive.

Rees himself was in Amritsar, trying to find Master Tara Singh. He and the Superintendent of Police—himself a Sikh—reached the scene of this horror just too late to save any of the victims. When Rees met Tara Singh he told him, in curt, frank terms, what he had just seen. The Sikh leader professed himself horrified. . .[2]

Parliament, the Press and the public at large in Britain had no idea, then or subsequently, of the ordeal to which the last of those who had held watch and ward in India were compelled to submit. It was expedient that the careers of these men should be terminated; was it necessary that their hearts should be broken, that they should have to stand, powerless, watching the destruction or what at that time seemed to be the destruction—of all that they and their forebears had striven to build?[3]

These facts speak for themselves. Mountbatten made no effort to honour the assurance given by him to League leaders, Maulana Azad and the Joint Defence Committee to prevent bloodshed and murder. The change of schedule, accompanied by large-scale killings and riotings and by the Congress leaders' refusal to co-operate in the division of military stores, was meant to kill Pakistan in its embryonic stage.

1 Connell, p. 901. 2 *Ibid.*, p. 906. 3 *Ibid.*, p. 901.

The Maulana's thesis also indicates that the leaders of the Congress were convinced that Pakistan could not sustain for long. In his account we can read the real answer to the question why the Congress leaders had begun to support the scheme of partition after their meeting with Mountbatten. He says:

> It was even then clear to me that the Congress leaders had not accepted partition with free and open minds. Some had accepted it out of sheer anger and resentment and others out of a sense of despair. Men when they are swayed by indignation or fear cannot judge objectively. How could the advocates of partition, who acted under the stress of passion, see the implications of what they were doing?
>
> Among Congressmen the greatest supporter of partition was Sardar Patel, but even he did not believe that partition was the best solution of the Indian problem. He threw his weight in favour of partition out of irritation and injured vanity. He found himself frustrated at every step by the veto put on his proposals by Liaquat Ali Khan as Finance Minister. It was, therefore, in sheer anger that he decided that if there was no other alternative, partition should be accepted. He was also convinced that the new State of Pakistan was not viable and could not last. He thought that the acceptance of Pakistan would teach the Muslim League a bitter lesson. Pakistan would collapse in a short time and the provinces which had seceded from India would have to face untold difficulty and hardship.[1]

The real cause of the Hindu leaders' agreement to the Pakistan scheme was their conviction that it would not sustain for long and the territories falling to its lot would have to face indescribable suffering

1 *India Wins Freedom*, p. 207.

leading to a collapse. They were not taken in by the personal charm of Lord or Lady Mountbatten as Maulana Azad seems to think. They would have never agreed to it, if Mountbatten had not convinced them that Pakistan could not continue for long. The whole scheme was that the boundaries of Pakistan should be narrowed down to the minimum and that the Punjab should be divided in such a way as to confront Pakistan with the problems of Kashmir and Canal Waters. Otherwise what could be the meaning of Mountbatten's advice to the Congress leaders that he would not tell Mr. Jinnah about the division of the Punjab and Bengal till a suitable moment? At the same time they had planned to take into possession all the military stores and equipments and deprive Pakistan of its share.

In April, 1947 Liaquat Ali Khan in his capacity as Finance Member had moved for the preparation of a scheme to divide the Armed Forces. The Committee considered this plan in its meeting of April 25, and decided that the issue of separation of the Armed Forces should not be put to the Cabinet until a political decision had been made. This decision was taken in spite of the insistence of the Finance Minister that "there must be a plan in readiness to go ahead with separation if Pakistan is accepted". No such plan was considered indispensable at that time because till then the date of final transfer of power was June 1, 1948, which could give full one year for making and implementing such a plan. But when the date was cut short by ten months it was essential to resort to the same speed and expediency in the matter of dividing the Armed Forces and military stores. But,

as John Connell writes, work in that direction moved at a snail's speed. For 13 days after the announcement of the Partition Scheme formally and publicly and about 70 days after its informal acceptance by the British Government no machinery was set up for the big task involved. He says:

> To divide the personnel, assets and liabilities of the great and cumbrous structure of the Indian Empire in the brief period—seventy-two days precisely—which remained before the transfer of power, a Partition Council was set up and held its first meeting on June 13, ten days after the promulgation of the Mountbatten Plan.[1]

Auchinleck, the Commander-in-Chief, was appointed as the head of the Joint Defence Council and the Partition Council. But he was given, as we have seen earlier, no powers to suppress riots and stop bloodshed. His function was to divide the Army and the military stores. But in that task he got no co-operation either from the Congress Government in India or the Labour Government in London. Mr. Connell writes:

> Auchinleck, however, did retain his supranational status after August 15 but solely in an executive and administrative role. If the Joint Defence Council and the Partition Council failed to support him, because their members were at loggerheads, he could, in theory, appeal to the British Government. But the British Government were uninterested, ignorant and alarmed. Having conceded power they had no desire to appear even by giving their faithful servant the support he had a right to ask—to be trying to hold on to any remnant of it. Their role was that

1 Connell, pp. 887-8.

of the helpless and not particularly sympathetic bystander.[1]

In spite of difficult conditions Auchinleck tried to do his job like a conscientious officer. He divided the Army, reorganized some of the divided units and arranged to keep the training of the officers under joint control. In a letter dated September 19, 1947, addressed to General Scoones, he described his difficult task in these words:

> . . . Things have happened here and in the Punjab which would have been unbelievable a few weeks ago. The refugee problem is really colossal and to find a solution for it seems almost impossible. In short, the idea that the coming of partition and the grant of Dominion autonomy would cause communal feeling to die down has proved entirely false. Communal feeling today, from the highest to the lowest, is, in my opinion, as bitter as it possibly could be and any idea of real co-operation between the two Dominions on any subject is almost unthinkable at present. One can only hope that reason will prevail and that matters will now begin to improve in this respect. But there is no sign of it at present.
>
> Our position as a neutral body trying to partition the Armed Forces to the equal advantage of both Dominions is not, as you will realize, exactly an easy one. However, we are getting on with the job and we have done a tremendous amount since the Armed Forces Reconstitution Committee began to function. Quite frankly, I would not have believed it possible for any H. Q. staff to get through the amount of work that this staff has done here, especially in view of the difficulties and obstacles, some of them deliberately manufactured, with which they have had

1 *Ibid.*, p. 913.

> to contend. I think any fair-minded person would acknowledge that the work has been well done and that an incredible amount has been accomplished in a very short space of time, so far without any real breakdown of discipline, morale or administration. There is no doubt now, I fear, that the Army has become infected with the communal virus, and it has become so hot in those establishments like schools of instruction which are still joint, that we are taking steps to separate Pakistan trainees in such schools from the Indian trainees, even although this means disintegration of training for the former. Our original idea was to keep these schools and establishments joint until such time as they could be duplicated in the other Dominion; this has now, I am afraid, gone the way of many other dreams.[1]

However, before Auchinleck could take up substantially the job of dividing the military stores a great storm of protest was raised against him by the Congress leaders. To deprive Pakistan of its share of military stores was a basic part of their plan to destroy Pakistan. Under a neutral agency this could not be possible. Therefore they made Auchinleck the target of their main attack. They expected that he would fall in line with Mountbatten. But when the Congress leaders saw that he meant business, they insisted, under various pretexts, that the Headquarters of the Joint Defence Council he closed.

It may be recalled here that Auchinleck was originally a strong opponent of the Pakistan scheme. He was, perhaps on that score, suspected by the Muslim League leaders, as being pro-Congress. Johnson writes in his diary of April 4, 1947:

1 *Ibid.*, pp. 913-14.

Maurice tells me that one possible reason for Nehru's and Congress's support for Auchinleck is the fear that if he resigned he would be succeeded by Slim, who is—rightly or wrongly—regarded as more pro-Muslim. This, of course, would be an explanation of Liaquat's and Moslem League's readiness to provoke Auchinleck into leaving.[1]

Auchinleck, however, a straightforward soldier as he was, could not make a political alliance with the Congress as Mountbatten the politician did. And this was enough ground for the Congress leaders to start a campaign of vilification and abuse against him. Mountbatten ultimately became a party to this demand also. Without taking Auchinleck into confidence he got Mr. Attlee's approval to a proposal for the closing of the H. Q. of the Joint Defence Council. Mountbatten, in a 1,500-worded letter, which he described to be 'the most difficult letter of his life', wrote to Auchinleck on September 26, 1947, requesting him to send the proposal for closing the H. Q., as demanded by the Congress leaders! Therein, *inter alia*, he stated:

> .... Alas, my hopes were very soon shaken. Scarcely had the new set-up come into force, when a volume of criticism started, not only in the papers (which I managed to get stopped) but in the Cabinet itself. I am sure you have been aware of this criticism but I doubt whether you realize its extent or its persistency.
>
> . . . But, above all, my dear Claude, I should simply hate to contemplate a discussion in which your great name became the subject of bitter controversy, and in the course of which imputations might be made which, though palpably

1 Campbell-Johnson, p. 55.

unjustified, could not but cast a slur on your reputation and prestige.

I should be a poor friend if I did not admit that this resentment, which was initially directed against your position, has inevitably turned against yourself. One of the most balanced and level-headed Ministers complained recently that you seemed to regard yourself as the champion of Pakistan's interests; such is the reward of strict impartiality. It is only fair to add that Pandit Nehru himself has no personal bias in this matter and sympathizes with the difficulties of your position.

I have argued the case with the Indian leaders at great length. I have pointed out that you have no operational command over the Armed Forces of either Dominion, and that Lockhart, Elmhirst and Hall are responsible solely to the Indian Cabinet. I have emphasized that you are responsible to His Majesty's Government for all the British officers now serving in India, as well as for the British troops who are awaiting withdrawal. I have reminded them of your unparalleled services to India and to the Indian Army, and of the deep personal regard which they entertained for you in the past.

I am sorry to say that I have completely failed to convince them . . . and the point has now been reached when I can no longer prevent them from putting up an official proposal to the Joint Defence Council that the Supreme Headquarters should be abolished and replaced by an organization with a less high sounding title and headed by less high-ranking officers.

. The discussion of a proposal of this kind in the Joint Defence Council would be absolutely deplorable. It is possible that the Pakistan representative would oppose the proposal out of

cussedness, but not, I fear, out of any sincere desire to support you. It is only a short while ago that they were pressing for your removal on the grounds of your alleged anti-Moslem sentiments during the Gurgaon disturbances. But whatever line Pakistan might take, I myself would find it a most difficult case to argue.

I have felt so guilty in our recent talks at being unable to put the case fairly and squarely before you: but I was so terribly anxious to keep you by my side, that I hoped against hope that things would blow over.

I have been keeping back from you till now a matter which I have only recently received the Prime Minister's decision to disclose to you.[1]

Mountbatten was fully aware of the motive behind the Hindu move to get the H. Q. of the Joint Defence Council closed. He knew that it would mean aggression and a glaring violation of the agreement of which he himself was the author. He must also have realized that his suggestion which had the approval and the authority of His Majesty's Government would mean not only breach of trust reposed in him by Pakistan but would also involve Pakistan and the British Government into a serious diplomatic conflict. This act on his part leaves no doubt about his partiality towards the Congress.

Auchinleck, however, pointed out to him the consequence of this move in his letter dated October 6, 1947. He wrote:

I am well aware, of course, of the pressure which is being put upon you by your Government to effect the removal of myself and my Headquarters. I and my advisers are well aware of the reasons for this pressure. I would, however, remind you that my Headquarters serves

1 Connell, pp. 915-18.

> not only India but also Pakistan, through the medium of the Joint Defence Council, of which you are the independent Chairman. Therefore, before any action can be taken in this matter, the prior agreement of the Government of Pakistan is necessary. So far as I am aware, the Government of Pakistan has not yet been consulted as to what it considers should be the date for the closing down of my Headquarters.[1]

Auchinleck apprised in detail the British Prime Minister of the whole situation in a letter, dated September 28, 1947. He wrote:

> I have no hesitation whatever in affirming that the present India Cabinet are implacably determined to do all in their power to prevent the establishment of the Dominion of Pakistan on a firm basis. In this I am supported by the unanimous opinion of my senior officers, and indeed by all responsible British officers cognizant of the situation. No one was originally more strongly opposed to partition than myself, if only for military and strategical reasons, but since H. M. G. made their decision and I was entrusted with the task of dividing the former Indian Armed Forces between the two Dominions, I and my officers have worked whole-heartedly and impartially to effect this. There can be no question as to the truth of this statement.
>
> Before the transfer of power on August 15 the representatives of the new India forbore to show their hand and displayed generally a spirit of reasonableness and an apparent desire to co-operate. The meetings of the Armed Forces Reconstitution Committee were conducted in an encouraging spirit of co-operation and of give-and-take.
>
> Since August 15, however, the situation has steadily deteriorated and the Indian leaders,

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 925.

Cabinet Ministers, Civil officials and others have persistently tried to obstruct the work of partition of the Armed Forces. I and my officers have been continuously and virulently accused of being pro-Pakistan and partial, whereas the truth is that we have merely tried to do our duty impartially and without fear, favour or affection. That we have done this is universally acknowledged by all fair-minded people. This campaign continues and grows stronger and more vicious every day. The Governor-General, Lord Mountbatten, is subjected to strong and unceasing pressure to abolish my Headquarters, so that the one impartial body remaining in this country shall be removed.

So open and obvious are these attacks that there is not one of the officers of Supreme Commander's H. Q., senior or junior, who is not imbued with the greatest disgust for and dislike of the creators of this state of affairs. It is probably fair to say that few, if any of them, would wish to take service under the India Government. They, like the majority of their countrymen, cannot give of their best unless they are trusted and respected for their good faith. The Governor-General has done his best to check this campaign but with little result. The authors of it are too strongly imbued with the implacable determination to remove anything which is likely to prevent their gaining their own ends, which are to prevent Pakistan receiving her just share, or indeed anything of arsenals and depots in India. This is an open secret. This being so, it is becoming increasingly impossible for myself and my officers to continue with our task. If we are removed, there is no hope at all of any just division of assets in the shape of movable stores belonging to the former Indian Army.

> The attitude of Pakistan, on the other hand, has been reasonable and co-operative throughout. This is natural in the circumstances, as Pakistan has practically nothing of her own and must obtain most of what she wants from the reserves of stores, etc. now lying in India.[1]

Later in the report he wrote:

> There is no doubt that the civil administration in the East Punjab (India) has almost completely broken down and that law and order have practically ceased to exist. In the West Punjab (Pakistan) conditions in this respect are better, but the administration is terribly weak there also.
>
> Today, there is an organized system of information and control which enables Muslim refugee trains to be attacked with impunity. A few days ago, 1,500 helpless refugees are said to have been massacred in one such train alone at Amritsar, the escort, including the British officers in command, being killed or wounded. On the other hand, military trains carrying troops and stores in the furtherance of Reconstitution are unmolested.
>
> Delhi is quiet now, but there is no guarantee that the killings will not start again at any moment. The country round is in a thoroughly disturbed state and no Muslim can move about freely without risk to his life.
>
> On the other side, too, in Pakistan, there have been equally horrible occurrences, though the general impression is that these are more spontaneous and less organized than those in the East Punjab.
>
> In the last week or so at least five British officers have been killed in carrying out their

1 *Ibid.*, pp. 920-22.

duty in attempting to protect refugees or in putting down disorder.[1]

The letter also contained Auchinleck's proposal to close down his H. Q., made in deference to the wishes of H. M. G. against his will or conviction.

Connell has given a graphic account of the proceedings of the meeting of the Joint Defence Council, which debated Auchinleck's proposal. The relevent portions reproduced below speak loudly of the openly hostile and partial attitude of Mountbatten. He writes:

> The next meeting of the Joint Defence Council was held in Lahore on October 16. It was extremely stormy. Item 17 on the agenda was Auchinleck's proposal that his Headquarters should close down on November 30.
>
> Mountbatten was in the chair. Nehru was not present, India being represented by Baldev Singh and Gopalaswami Ayyanger, an influential member of the All-India Congress Committee, who had joined the administration as Minister without portfolio but with a special responsibility for the East Punjab. Liaquat Ali Khan, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, opened by declaring his opposition to the proposal.
>
> The Indians, assured that they were getting their own way, smoothly and complacently supported the proposal. What they were anxious to avoid, however, was any disclosure of the real reasons for the decision. But in this manoeuvre Auchinleck had no intention of being an accomplice. Liaquat continued stubbornly to present the case for the retention of the Headquarters. The Indians took refuge behind the Supreme Commander's own recommendations.

1 *Ibid.*, pp. 922-3.

He did not let them escape unscathed. He observed:

My reasons for that recommendation are stated as mildly as possible—in the paper which is before the meeting. In the present atmosphere it has become impossible for me and my officers to carry on with our task after November 30. I am not prepared to keep my officers in this impossible situation. Continual innuendos and accusations are being levelled against my Headquarters. I and my officers cannot continue, in such circumstances, to perform a task for which co-operation is necessary. I have not made this proposal in any desire to run away from the completion of my responsibilities, but because in this situation I cannot for much longer discharge those responsibilities.

Gopalaswami Ayyangar: I am very strongly in favour of accepting the recommendations in the paper. If it is intended to deal with this question on the basis of having to make out a case one way or the other, I shall found my argument on the fact that the major part of the assigned task has been done. These grounds alone are sufficient.

Auchinleck: Let me make myself clear. I have not completed the task which I set out to perform. And let me stress this: I have nothing to add to my paper, which represents my considered views. I have lately visited Karachi. While I was there I told Mr. Jinnah what I intend to do.

Mountbatten: I believe that, if these riots and massacres hadn't happened, and brought about this atmosphere of suspicion, hostility indeed, it would have been possible for the Supreme Commander's Headquarters to carry on. But, you see, *whereas in Karachi there have been very few incidents, in Delhi there has been almost com-*

plete dislocation. The atmosphere in Delhi is far more highly charged than in Karachi, and it's made it very difficult for the Supreme Commander's Headquarters to function.

Liaquat Ali Khan: I should have been able to appreciate this if the officers of the Headquarters had been Muslims, Hindus or Sikhs. But I don't understand how the killings can have affected the British officers in the Headquarters. Anyway, surely the logical conclusion is for the Supreme Commander's Headquarters to move to Karachi.

Gopalaswami Ayyangar: That will not improve the atmosphere in Delhi.

The wrangle went on for some time more. When it veered to the division of stores and equipment, the air quivered with animosity. The Indians smoothly hinted that this was a routine question to be settled between the two Dominions themselves.

Liaquat Ali Khan: The division of stores is not a minor but a major matter. An army without equipment is as much of use as tin soldiers.[1]

Against this background and in view of the openly partial and hostile part played by Mountbatten, it is no wonder that Auchinleck's biographer should remark:

The position of Lord Mountbatten in respect of this campaign against Auchinleck was singularly unfortunate, and as it gathered momentum he was not altogether free from blame.

A careful study of Ian Stephen's account, in his *Horned Moon*, of Mountbatten's prejudices against Pakistan leaves no doubt that the Viceroy was throughout a party to the plots against the new

1 *Ibid.*, pp. 926-8.

dominion. Of his meeting with the Viceroy in July, Stephen writes:

> Discussing *The Statesman's* position with me during the first week of July, he had asked what our intentions were in Pakistan. "I hear you're opening an office in Karachi; is that so?"
>
> "Unfortunately no", I told him. "We're fully stretched with our building extensions in Delhi. They were decided on long before Partition."
>
> He expressed relief, then added: "You said 'unfortunately'. Why?"
>
> I was puzzled. "Being British-owned, we'll presumably have to try to maintain an inter-Dominion policy, in fairness. That might be easier if we published in both countries."
>
> He said he thought we would find things much simpler as they were. We could drop our Pakistani or Muslim circulation and "concern ourselves primarily with India's affairs".
>
> A whole-hearted admirer, I did not at the time think of bias in this. I supposed it due to misunderstanding of our particular circulation problems, too detailed then to go into; and I set the matter aside. Reflecting upon it anew, it perturbed me.[1]

And again about his second meeting on October 26, he writes:

> But this anticipates. On the same evening, October 26, the evening when Delhi buzzed with comments on the Pathan incursion, I was asked to dinner with the Mountbattens, a small party. Pre-occupied in Calcutta, I had not seen them for some weeks. As I recorded soon afterwards in a memorandum, I was "startled by their one-sided verdicts on affairs". They seemed to have "become wholly pro-Hindu". The atmosphere at

1 Stephens, pp. 113-14.

Government House that night was almost one of war. Pakistan, the Muslim League, and Mr. Jinnah were the enemy. This tribal movement into Kashmir was criminal folly. And it must have been well organized. Mr. Jinnah, Lord Mountbatten assured me, was waiting at Abbottabad, ready to drive in triumph to Srinagar if it succeeded. It was a thoroughly evil affair. By contrast, India's policy towards Kashmir, and the Princely States generally, had throughout been "impeccable".

After the meal, Lord Mountbatten took me aside. As editor of an important paper I should know the facts fully. Because of the Pathan attack, the Maharajah's formal accession to India was at that moment being finalized. Subject to a plebiscite, this great State, its inhabitants mainly Muslim, would now be legally lost to Jinnah. The Pakistanis had been crazy to accept the accession of Junagadh. Indian troops were to be flown into Kashmir at once; arrangements had been made. This was the only way to save Srinagar from sack by ruffianly tribesmen. It contained many Europeans, he pointed out. Outrages against helpless Europeans in the invaded regions were reported already.

What, he went on, could be more high-minded, in these circumstances, than Nehru's acceptance of Kashmir's accession subject to the special qualifications of a plebiscite? Accession could have been very properly accepted without reserve of any kind. My memorandum records him as "persuasive, confident, charming, a successful commander on the eve of an important operation, who manifestly banked on hustling *The Statesman* into complete support".

I was flabbergasted. The Junagadh affair, amidst so many other pressing events, I had perhaps wrongly looked upon almost as a trivi-

ality. Moreover there already seemed signs that India might forcibly reverse it—as she soon did. But Kashmir was very different, a State recognized to be of first-class importance, strategically and sentimentally. The whole concept of dividing the subcontinent into Hindu-majority and Muslim-majority areas, the basis of the June 3 Plan, seemed outraged. At a Hindu Maharajah's choice, but with a British Governor-General's backing, three million Muslims, in a region always considered to be vital to Pakistan if she were created, were legally to be made Indian citizens.

I said little, except for expressing doubts whether a plebiscite would prove readily feasible; went back much concerned, feeling that nothing but big trouble could come of this thing; and next day managed to get an interview with the Deputy Prime Minister, Sardar Patel. I much liked the tough old Sardar, even when in disagreement with his views; he had always been very cordial and frank. Five minutes with him was in my experience worth fifteen with Pandit Nehru. My memorandum however records that "undercurrents in his remarks seemed only to confirm my surmise that India's policies towards the princely States had not been wholly 'impeccable', in aim or method.[1]

According to Stephens, Mountbatten's hostility towards Pakistan was due to two causes. Firstly, his vanity was wounded by his not being appointed Governor-General of Pakistan; this had made him a personal enemy of Jinnah and the new-born state of Pakistan. Secondly, the Labour Party was on friendly terms with the Congress, and Mountbatten himself was a man of progressive views.

This view is corroborated by another Englishman, Sir Francis Mudy, who was the first Governor

1 Stephens, *ibid.*, pp. 109-11.

of the West Punjab after Partition. He wrote to Hector Bolitho about his views on the character and position of the Quaid-i-Azam. These are his words:

> In judging Jinnah, we must remember what he was up against. He had against him not only the wealth and brains of the Hindus, but also nearly the whole of British officialdom, and most of the Home politicians, who made the great mistake of refusing to take Pakistan seriously. Never was his position really examined.[1]

These statements prove that the Labour Government or at least most of the members of the Labour Party were against Pakistan, and that Mountbatten had been sent to give effect to their ideas and carry out their policies in regard to the solution of the Indian problem. Where Wavell had failed the new Viceroy was determined to succeed. The statements and the account given by Maulana Azad leaves not the slightest shadow of doubt that the Congress leaders, one after the other, changed their views on the question of partition as and when they met Mountbatten. The reason for this change in their views was neither the failure of the Interim Government to work as a team nor, as we have noted earlier, the personal charm of Mountbatten or his wife. In fact, the scheme that he had devised with the assistance of some Hindu leaders was in the interests of the Congress. Soon after partition, Acharya Kirpalani had persuaded the Hindu bankers and traders of Sind to migrate to India because it would not be long (as he thought) when they would be able to return triumphantly to their homes. Pakistan, he had assured them, could not live for more than a few months, and its leaders would soon throw themselves at the mercy of the Indians and request the Government to undo partition.

Before August 15, when the Radcliffe Award

1 Bolitho, p. 208.

had not been announced, the League leaders could not even dream that Pakistan would be deprived of the Muslim majority district of Gurdaspur simply because India had to be provided with a passage into Kashmir. There were sinister developments the significance of which they failed to grasp. Gandhi, Kirpalani and other Hindu leaders were making rather frequent visits to Srinagar. Gopalaswami Ayyengar who had been the Prime Minister of Kashmir from 1937 to 1943 and was notorious for his anti-Muslim attitude and policies was made Minister without portfolio in the Indian Cabinet simply because he was considered to be an expert on Kashmir affairs. Indeed, Kashmir could not be seized as it was on October 29, 1947, if the Hindu leaders had not known beforehand that Gurdaspur, though a Muslim-majority district, was to form part of India. And this they could not have known but through Mountbatten. About this time Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan was touring Afghanistan. Stephens refers to the Kashmir situation in these words:

> When I read in September that Mr. Gopalaswami Ayyengar, a very able and reputedly anti-Muslim Madrasi Brahmin, who was the Prime Minister of Kashmir from 1937 to 1943, had been made Minister without Portfolio in the new Indian Cabinet, I said to our editorial conference in Calcutta: "That really does look as if India's up to something at Srinagar"; and our correspondents were told to watch for news.
>
> There had been what seemed earlier pointers: for example, the successive visits to Kashmir, shortly before Partition, of Acharya Kirpalani, President of the Congress Party, of some Ruling Princes from the East Punjab, and of Mahatma Gandhi. Now in one plane of his being Mahatma Gandhi was a saint, or at any rate an exceptionally good man. I interviewed him many times, and felt reverence as well as warm liking for him.

> But in another—this kind of seeming self-division, puzzling to some Westerners, can in Asia be perfectly natural and true—he was one of the world's most ingenious politicians; and it was hard to think what could have drawn him, as a saint, to Srinagar at that moment.
>
> From early in July rumours had begun to reach us, of the sort since set forth in a book by Wilfred Russell, that the Hindu Maharajah of Kashmir, although the overwhelming majority of his subjects were Muslims, was privately seeking pretexts for acceding to India. Of their accuracy it was impossible to judge. Contrary rumours that he was in a state of feeble indecision might be truer. Nevertheless those of the first sort were too many to be ignored.
>
> I had noted with interest, too, the announcements shortly before Partition of visits to Kabul, the Afghan capital, by the "Frontier Gandhi", Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, and by a Hindu expert on Pathan affairs. For it was evident that if, on Pakistan's birth—the mere notion of which still outraged most Indian nationalists—co-ordinated movements opposed to her could be produced in Kashmir and Afghanistan, both of them predominantly Muslim territories and near to one another, the new State might be still-born, crushed by a sort of pincer-movement. At that time moreover Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan's brother was still Chief Minister of the predominantly Muslim North-West Frontier Province.[1]

Mountbatten, being the Governor-General of the United India up to August 15, 1947, was expected to be neutral and impartial in all disputes between the Congress and League and the two new dominions. But the manner in which he exerted his personal

1 Stephens, pp. 107-08.

influence and utilized his official position, his connections with the Royal family and his associations with the Labour Government to force the Indian States to accede to India hardly leaves any room for speculation. Mr. V. P. Menon, who was personally associated with Mountbatten as his Constitutional Adviser and was Secretary to the Cabinet up to 1947 and to Sardar Patel in the Ministry of States after Partition, has given an interesting and revealing account of the part played by Mountbatten in bringing round the Princes and Rulers of Indian States to sign the Instruments of Accession. He admits that but for the personal help of Mountbatten, the situation might have taken a different turn. Explaining the position just after the announcement of the Partition Plan of June 3, he writes:

> Strong speeches were made at the All-India Congress Committee which met at Delhi on 14 June protesting against the 'Balkanization' of the country. A strongly-worded resolution was passed declaring that the Congress did not agree with the theory of paramountcy as enunciated and interpreted by the British Government. It affirmed that the privileges and obligations as well as the rights subsisting as between the States and the Government of India could not be adversely affected by the lapse of paramountcy. Nor would the relationship between the Government of India and the States be exhausted by it. The lapse of paramountcy did not lead to the independence of the States. The Committee refused to admit the right of any State to declare its independence and to live in isolation from the rest of India. That would be a denial of the course of Indian history and the objectives of the Indian people.

Jinnah, on the other hand, contested the

Congress thesis. In a statement issued on 18 June, he unequivocally declared that, constitutionally and legally, the States would be independent sovereign States on the termination of paramountcy and that they would be free to adopt any course they liked. He was clearly of the opinion that the Cabinet Mission's memorandum did not in any way limit their choice to the extent that they had no option except to join one or the other Constituent Assembly. In his opinion they were free to remain independent if they so desired. Neither the British Government nor the British Parliament nor any other power or body could compel the States to do anything contrary to their free will and accord, nor had they any power or sanction of any kind to do so.[1]

He then reveals the circumstances and the manner in which Mountbatten was approached for help.

I explained to Sardar how the rulers could be brought in. 'Defence' was obviously a matter which no State could conduct by itself: 'external affairs' was a subject inextricably linked with 'defence' and, as the States had never handled it before, even the largest State could not hope to do so effectively: 'communications' was a means of maintaining the very life-lines of the country and without our co-operation, the States could do nothing in this matter. I also pointed out that the communal flare-up in north India had made the non-Muslim rulers turn away from Pakistan and I suggested that we should use this development to our advantage. Provided that we did not demand any financial or other commitments, the rulers would not be unwilling to consider our proposal. However, the time at our disposal was

1 V. P. Menon, *The Story of the Integration of the Indian States*, pp. 90-91. Unless otherwise stated, all references to Menon are to his other book: *The Transfer of Power in India.*

extremely short and if we planned for accession we should get it implemented before 15 August. My most important consideration was the overall security of the country. If the rulers acceded on 'defence', the Government of India obtained right of entry into any State where internal stability was threatened. 'Defence' covered not only external aggression but internal security as well. Sardar was inclined to agree with my proposal. I requested him to put it before Nehru and get his approval. To put down anything in writing at that stage was inadvisable as there was likelihood of leakage, and premature publicity would have been harmful to the plan.

Next day Sardar told me that Nehru was in agreement with the proposal 'if we could see it through'. It seemed to me from Sardar's remark that Nehru was perhaps sceptical about the success of the Plan. Nor was Sardar himself over? optimistic. For one thing, he was doubtful whether we could get the accession policy implemented in the few weeks before 15 August; but, as I suggested to Sardar, the very shortness of time might work to our advantage.

Incidentally, I proposed that the active co-operation of Lord Mountbatten should be secured. Apart from his position, his grace and his gifts, his relationship to the Royal family was bound to influence the rulers. Sardar wholeheartedly agreed and asked me to approach him without delay.

A day or two later, I met Lord Mountbatten and mentioned to him my talk with Sardar and our tentative plan. I asked for his help in getting the States to accede on three subjects. I pointed out that they would not be losing anything in the result and suggested that it would be a great act of statesmanship on his part if he could bring it about. I felt that he was deeply touched by my

> remark that the wounds of partition might to some extent be healed by the States entering into relationship with the Government of India and that he would be earning the gratitude of generations of Indians if he could assist in achieving the basic unity of the country. He told me that he would think the matter over. I confess that I was seized momentarily by the fear that Lord Mountbatten might be adversely influenced by some of his advisers. But to my relief and joy, he accepted the Plan. Lord Mountbatten discussed the matter with Sardar. This frank talk enabled them to explain and understand each other's point of view. I should add that Nehru, with the approval of the Cabinet, readily entrusted Lord Mountbatten with the task of negotiating with the rulers on the question of accession and also with the task of dealing with Hyderabad.[1]

Then he goes on to narrate in detail the efforts of Lord Mountbatten. He says:

> On 28 July Lord Mountbatten gave a colourful reception at the Viceroy's House in honour of over fifty rulers and a hundred States' representatives. Pakistan representatives were also present. This reception was in the nature of a last-minute canvassing of voters near the polling booth. Those of the rulers who had not yet signified their intention of acceding were taken by the A. D. C.s one by one for a friendly talk with Lord Mountbatten. When he had finished with them, he passed them on to me in full view of the company and I, in my turn, conducted them across the room to Sardar. This had a good psychological effect on the rulers who were present.
>
> There were, however, many rulers who did not attend this reception, and who were either

1 *Ibid.*, pp. 97-8.

hostile to the plan of accession or were sitting on the fence. As mentioned before, Hyderabad and Travancore had already announced their independence and their lead was followed by several others, whose attitude was naturally causing the Government of India some anxiety.

Meanwhile, the Muslim League leaders were by no means idle. Meetings between them and some of the rulers had become almost a daily occurrence. Tempting concessions were being offered to the rulers to inveigle them into joining Pakistan. The League leaders were concentrating in particular on some of the border States.

As if the intransigence of some of the rulers and the inveigling tactics of the League leaders were not enough, it seemed that the Political Department was adding to our worries. That Department had encouraged the Nawab of Bhopal in his efforts to evolve a 'Third Force' out of the States and reports were being brought to me by some of the rulers that they were being instigated not to accede to India. This naturally upset me. I acquainted Lord Mountbatten with what I had heard. I felt that if both Sir Conrad Corfield and myself operated in the same field, it was like trying to walk simultaneously in two opposite directions. Soon after, Sir Conrad Corfield went on leave to England and retired from service.

On 1 August, Lord Mountbatten gave a luncheon to several of the leading rulers. The A. D. C.s had helped to form virtual 'Aye' and 'No' lobbies of the rulers in accordance with their attitude to accession. The Maharajahs of Patiala and of Bikaner created a diversion by passing through the 'No' lobby and then roaring with laughter. The 'No' lobby consisted of 'last-ditchers' who were inclined to execute Standstill Agreements and to mark time so far as the Instrument of Accession was concerned. To deal

with them it was announced at a conference of rulers and States' ministers at Bikaner House on 1 August that the Government of India had decided that Standstill Agreements would be entered into only with those rulers who executed the Instrument of Accession.

The process of getting Instruments of Accession signed involved considerable persuasion, strain and anxiety. It was easy enough to get the signatures of those rulers who had been the first to send their representatives to the Constituent Assembly; but a series of negotiations now began with those rulers who opposed the policy of accession.

I have already mentioned that soon after the announcement of the 3 June Plan, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar (Sir C. P. for short) had declared that Travancore would assert its independence with the transfer of power. In view particularly of his position in the public life of the country, this statement had deleterious repercussions and encouraged those rulers who were not favourably disposed towards the Indian Dominion. When we issued invitations for the meeting of rulers and States' representatives to be held on 25 July, the Government of Travancore replied that there was no point in their representatives attending this meeting, as the State had decided not to accede to India. It should be pointed out that at about this time the Travancore State Congress had threatened a campaign of direct action to begin from 1 August. The Congress press in India had been extremely caustic in its comments on Sir C. P. In fact there had been a sharp exchange of words between the Congress leaders and Sir C. P. in the newspapers. This was certainly not helpful.

Lord Mountbatten therefore invited Sir C. P. to New Delhi. On 20 July I had an exploratory

talk with him. I explained to him the advantages which would accrue to Travancore as a result of accession. All we asked was executive and legislative authority in regard to defence, external affairs and communications. Sir C. P. referred to the proposal of the Union Consultative Committee of the Constituent Assembly to divert to the Centre the revenues from customs, import and export duties. He pointed out that Travancore was a maritime State deriving nearly half its total revenue from these heads; and if it were to accede on these conditions, it would be reduced to a fifth-rate State. I assured him that the present accession plan had nothing to do with the new constitution and that what we were asking for was accession on three subjects under the Government of India Act of 1935 without any financial or other commitments. Sir C. P. admitted that he had not been aware of this approach. I pointed out that on 15 August the States would literally be released from the Centre and would thereafter have no contact either with the Centre or among themselves. This was too dangerous a position and if the transitional period was not safeguarded, the result might be complete chaos. Transitions were always risky. In India especially, there was real danger of unsocial elements rearing their heads. One aspect of the question which was causing particular concern was the communist menace. The only remedy against this was to build up an integrated economic and political system strong enough to withstand their ideology. I then brought down the discussion to the personal plane, assuring him of my high regard both for his realistic attitude to affairs and for the part he had played in the past. It ought not be said of him that at India's critical hour he had not made his contribution towards building a united India when he had in his power to

do so. I begged him not to take any precipitate action. Whatever might be his grievances against the Congress, the utterances of its leaders ought not to deflect him from what he considered to be in the best interests, not only of Travancore, but of India, as a whole. Sir C. P. replied that he could not give an answer immediately but he assured me that, 'coming from a sincere well-wisher of the States and of myself in particular, your comments will have my closest attention'.

Sir C. P. met Lord Mountbatten on 21 July, when the latter tried to pin him down on the question of accession. Lord Mountbatten said that all other questions could be adjusted by negotiation and agreement later on. He added that here was a golden opportunity for Travancore to play its part. The accession of Travancore would be hailed throughout India as a great act of statesmanship, nor would it entail any financial loss to the State. On the other hand, in the shaping of the future destinies of India, Travancore could play a very important part since its representatives would be sitting in the Dominion Legislature. Sir C. P. stated that he would not agree to 'accession' but to some 'agreement' on three subjects.

In a subsequent talk with Sir C. P. I made it clear that an 'agreement' on three subjects would not be acceptable, as other States would want to follow his example. A signature on the Instrument of Accession was absolutely necessary. At first he was adamant, but after a further interview with Lord Mountbatten, he agreed that accession was inevitable. As he had to be back in Trivandrum on 25 July in connexion with the death centenary of a former Maharajah of Travancore, a great composer and patron of music, he took with him the draft Instrument of Accession and personal letter to the Maharajah

from Lord Mountbatten, promising to return on 27 July. Before he could do so, a personal attack was made on him and he was wounded. But the Maharajah telegraphed to Lord Mountbatten his acceptance of the Instrument of Accession and Standstill Agreement. This announcement had a distinct effect on other rulers who were still wavering. In the meantime, the Sardar appealed to the Travancore State Congress to suspend their campaign of direct action.

The late Maharajah Hanwant Singh of Jodhpur continued to be intractable. Jinnah and the Muslim League leaders had a series of meetings with him. At the last of these interviews, Maharajah Hanwant Singh had taken the then Maharajkumar of Jaisalmer with him, because the Maharajah of Bikaner would not accompany him and he shrank from going alone. Theirs were the three States geographically contiguous to Pakistan. Jinnah, I was told, signed a blank sheet of paper and gave it to Maharajah Hanwant Singh along with his own fountain pen, saying 'You can fill in all your conditions'. A discussion followed. The Maharajah was prepared to line up with Pakistan. He then turned to the Maharajkumar of Jaisalmer and asked him whether he would follow suit. The Maharajkumar said he would do so on one condition: if there was any trouble between the Hindus and Muslims, he would not side with the Muslims against the Hindus. This was a bombshell and took Maharajah Hanwant Singh completely by surprise. Sir Mohammad Zafrullah however made light of the whole affair and pressed Maharajah Hanwant Singh to sign the instrument. But the Maharajah now felt unable to take a decision. He suggested to Jinnah that he would go to Jodhpur and return the next day. The Maharajah remained at Jodhpur for three days. The atmosphere in the

State was hostile to the idea that Jodhpur should cast its lot with Pakistan; the Jagirdars and nobles were decidedly opposed to it. The Maharajah began to waver. When he returned to Delhi after three days I was informed that, unless I handled the Maharajah quickly, the chances were that he might accede to Pakistan. I went to the Hotel Imperial and told the Maharajah that Lord Mountbatten wanted to see him. We then drove to Government House and I kept the Maharajah in the visitors' room while I went in and explained the situation to Lord Mountbatten. The Maharajah was then called in. Lord Mountbatten made it clear that from a purely legal standpoint there was no objection to the ruler of Jodhpur acceding to Pakistan; but the Maharajah should, he stressed, consider seriously the consequences of his doing so, having regard to the fact that he himself was a Hindu; that his State was populated predominantly by Hindus and that the same applied to the States surrounding Jodhpur. In the light of these considerations, if the Maharajah were to accede to Pakistan, *his action would surely be in conflict with the principle underlying the partition of India on the basis of Muslim and non-Muslim majority areas;*[1] and serious communal trouble inside the State would be the inevitable consequence of such affiliation. The Maharajah started at once to ask for impossible concessions. I told him plainly: 'If you want to sign on false hopes, I will agree to your demands,' adding that most of the demands could not be conceded. He then told us that Jinnah had given him a blank paper in which he could put down all the concessions he wanted. I urged him not to

1 Yet, in the case of Kashmir, Lord Mountbatten, pro-Hindu that he was, forgot this cardinal principle of June 3 Plan. So did Radcliffe, under Mountbatten's inspiration, in his inequitous award. And, yet, the "truthful" Maulana would have us believe that the Viceroy and the British created Pakistan in order to advance their own interests or to reward the services of the Muslim League!

be swayed by false promises. After a great deal of discussion, I gave him a letter conceding some of his demands. Thereafter he signed the Instrument of Accession.

After a few minutes, Lord Mountbatten went out of the room and the Maharajah whipped out a revolver, levelled it at me and said: 'I refuse to accept your dictation'. I told him that he was making a very serious mistake if he thought that by killing me, or threatening to kill me, he could get the accession abrogated. 'Don't indulge in juvenile theatricals,' I admonished him. Shortly after, Lord Mountbatten returned and I told him what had happened. He made light of the episode and turned it to jest. Presently the Maharajah returned to normal and we departed in company. After leaving him at his residence, I returned to office. The whole episode became a standing joke between us later on.

The Nawab of Bhopal did not attend the meeting of Rulers and States' representatives on 25 July. He felt, as he put it, that they were being 'invited like the oysters to attend the tea party with the Walrus and the Carpenter'. He, along with the Maharajah of Indore, headed a group of rulers who strenuously opposed accession. The Nawab was firmly of opinion that it would be impossible for Bhopal to 'become an organic part of either Dominion'. He suggested that he should enter into treaty relations with both the Dominions. He was handled throughout by Lord Mountbatten. I was present at most of their meetings. Lord Mountbatten's long-standing personal friendship with the Nawab played its part in the latter's decision to accede. By the first week of August the Nawab had realized that the vast majority of the rulers had opted for accession and that, if he did not come in, Bhopal would be left in an anomalous and difficult position. He

> wanted to know whether he could sign a Standstill Agreement without acceding. We told him that Standstill Agreements would not be signed with rulers who refused to accede. He then sent his Constitutional Adviser, Sir Mohammad Zafrullah Khan, for clarification of the terms of the Instrument of Accession. We had a long discussion. I made it clear to Sir Mohammad that it would be impossible to make any alterations in the Instrument of Accession and that Bhopal would have to join on the same terms as all other States. At last the Nawab signed, but with the stipulations that his signature should be kept secret for ten days after the transfer of power. There was no difficulty in complying with this request.[1]

It is now an undeniable fact of history that Mountbatten left no stone unturned in consolidating and strengthening India's position and weakening Pakistan's. Indeed, India can never repay the debt of gratitude to Mountbatten and Pakistan will take generations to forget the wounds inflicted on her by him. In fairness to him we must not forget the basic fact that to help India at the cost of Pakistan was not an isolated act of his personal discretion. Nor was it an arbitrary act prompted by his personal likes or dislikes, nor the result of his injured vanity, as some people think. It was the consistent and planned policy of the Labour Government which he faithfully and loyally carried out. The Labour Government wanted a strong ally in the East. So it became their bounden duty to make India strong militarily, politically and economically. Menon reveals that collaboration with India in the security of the Indian Ocean was one of

1 *Ibid.*, pp. 113-18.

the primary aims of the Labour Government and Mountbatten was sent with definite instructions to achieve that end. He writes:

> With regard to the Indian States, Lord Mountbatten was directed to urge those rulers of Indian States where democratic progress had been slow to go forward more rapidly and to advise the rulers generally to reach fair and just arrangements with British India in regard to their future relationships.
>
> Lord Mountbatten was further directed to bear in mind that the transfer of power must be in accordance with Indian defence requirements. He was to impress upon the Indian leaders the importance of avoiding a break in the continuity of the Indian Army and the need for continued collaboration with His Majesty's Government in the security of the Indian Ocean.[1]

Mountbatten carried out the policy of his principals with masterly efficiency and dexterity. Yet another quotation from Menon, would clinch the issue and demolish the whole thesis of Maulana Azad that the Viceroy and the British Government encouraged Partition in order to advance their own interests or to reward the services of the Muslim League. He says:

> Addressing his usual prayer meeting, Gandhiji said: "The British Government is not responsible for partition". The Viceroy has no hand in it. In fact he is as opposed to division as Congress itself. But if both of us, Hindus and Muslims, cannot agree on anything else, then the Viceroy is left with no choice.[2]

1 Menon, p. 351.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 382.

CHAPTER XI

WHY THE CONSPIRACY FAILED?

THE Congress leaders had hoped that the mischief they had set afoot, would engender internal chaos in Pakistan: its people would lose heart, the leadership would be paralysed, and the whole country would be in the grip of a death-dealing economic crisis. Conditions would then be ripe for India to attack Pakistan and destroy her. Contrary to these expectations, the people of Pakistan stood up to these misfortunes with extraordinary fortitude. Within six months of partition, i.e., by March, 1948, about 6.5 million refugees had crossed into Pakistan from India. More than five million of them were exposed for months to biting cold and heavy rains, thousands had died and hundreds of thousands went without adequate shelter for years. But they carried on undaunted, their spirits high and their morale unshaken. Government servants, the army and the police all put their heads together in organizing the new State and exhibited the highest standards of discipline and character.

In his book on Pakistan, Symonds gives a graphic account of these post-partition events. He writes:

> The British Supreme Commander's headquarters was closed on 1st December, 1947 before

> any appreciable quantity of the material had been transferred.
>
> Pakistan had chosen as its provisional capital Karachi, the principal city of Sind and chief seaport of the area which now comprised Western Pakistan. Accommodation was arranged for the more important ministries in the Sind Secretariat, and in tents and barracks. Subordinate offices were set up in Lahore, and Army General Headquarters at Rawalpindi. From Delhi alone twenty-five thousand government employees and their families, with sixty thousand tons of personal baggage, had to be moved to Karachi. The special train service which was started for them had to be suspended owing to derailment, looting and murder of passengers on their way through the Punjab. Indian commercial planes were next chartered, but were soon requisitioned by the Government of India for the transport of its own employees and refugees from Pakistan. British airlines provided forty planes which moved seven thousand Pakistani government servants. When conditions seemed safer rail transfer was restarted with armed escorts, but even then three trains were attacked and many passengers lost their lives.[1]

Later, he comments:

> The improvisation by Pakistan in seventy-two days of a federal government in a new capital, in spite of interrupted communications, was an excellent achievement. What was even more remarkable was the success of that government in withstanding the shock of the Punjab catastrophe.[2]

The people's sense of unity and their unbounded support to the country's leadership frustrated the designs of their enemies. Provincial prejudices or

1 Symonds, pp. 79-80. 2 *Ibid.*, p. 80.

linguistic and cultural differences had not as yet reared their ugly heads. A common danger had made every hutment of the nation an impregnable bastion, and men and women were prepared to make all sacrifices under the Muslim League's direction—to save Pakistan and its ideology. Thus, all Congress designs to destroy Pakistan in its embryonic stage were defeated by the courage and sacrifice of the new nation. Pakistan not only survived; in three years, it became a strong competitor of India itself, politically, economically and militarily.

Miscalculations of the Congress leaders

The Congress leaders had, in fact, been miscalculating from the very beginning. In 1937 they refused to form a coalition with the Muslim League by under-estimating the character and strength of the Muslims as a nation. With the help of a handful of "Nationalist Muslims" who were blindly supporting them, they planned to capture Muslim imagination and kill the Muslim League. But, in spite of the unlimited financial resources and a large, well-organized press at its disposal the Congress soon realized that all its plans had fallen through. The Muslim League in a very short time became as powerful and organized as the Congress. Yet Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and other Congress leaders continued to believe that Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim League could never rise to the heights of taking a revolutionary step. This miscalculation was solely responsible for Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's sabotaging the Cabinet Mission Plan and for forming Congress ministries without the co-operation of the Muslim League. In his estimation, the Congress, by capturing the government, would

demoralize the Muslims, and the Muslim League, unable to resort to direct action, would go into the wilderness. Here, as elsewhere, he could not see that Mr. Jinnah could effectively stand up to the combined machinations of the Hindus and the British Government. Maulana Azad refers to these miscalculations of the Congress in his book as follows:

> One may perhaps say in Jawaharlal's defence that he never expected the Muslim League to resort to direct action. Mr. Jinnah had never been a believer in mass movement. I have myself tried to understand what brought about this change in Mr. Jinnah.[1]

The Pakistan Movement, according to the Congress, was a farce. They thought Mr. Jinnah was using the Pakistan slogan as a sop to establish his own leadership in the country. Maulana Azad, for instance, writes:

> Till perhaps the very end Pakistan was for Jinnah a bargaining counter, but in fighting for Pakistan, he had overreached himself.[2]

National characteristics of the Muslims

Every nation has its own characteristics, its own national character and basic values which come to the fore in times of a national crisis. The ideals and overall outlook of a people and their attitude towards life play a very important role in the moulding of its national character. If a nation is seized of ambitions loftier than self-aggrandizement, no vicissitudes or storms can deflect it from the chartered course of its high destiny. But if it aims only at mundane glory and power it can easily be swayed by time and tide. The Muslim nation has certain soul-lifting traditions,

1 *India Wins Freedom*, p. 162. 2 *Ibid.*, p. 183.

a glorious history, and has always had clear-cut objectives. These factors have sustained it in crises and enabled it to bear trials cheerfully.

For instance, Changez and Halaku had played havoc with Muslim dominions, but, no sooner had the Christian Crusaders challenged Islam than a Muslim nation was born anew, and there emerged the great Sultan Salah-ud-Din Ayubi to re-organize Islam and meet the Christian challenge. When the Sultan's power declined and the Muslim world again was plagued by intrigues and internacine clashes, the Muslims re-organized themselves under the Sultan of Turkey and captured the whole of the Middle East and Eastern Europe.

In the last century the Muslims were once hemmed in by misfortunes, a multitude of them. But unity on the basis of the Islamic ideal always sustained them. There is no parallel in Indian history to Muslim suffering since 1857. Systematically, first, the East India Company and, then, the British Government suppressed them for no less than one hundred and fifty years after the battle of Plassey, and this situation obliterated, for all practical purposes, all hopes of their ever re-emerging as a nation in India. But it only needed a call from Mr. Jinnah in 1937 and the danger of Anglo-Hindu imperialism, to rally the Muslims behind the Muslim League. Muslims are never stronger than when confronted with disaster, and never more susceptible to temptation than when riding on the crest of power and prosperity. In ease and luxury they fight among themselves but in danger or in face of a threat to their religion, they rally as one man under the spirit of *jihad*, however powerful

the enemy. This spirit stems from the fundamental Muslim belief that wordly life is transitory and that death does not terminate life but only transforms its shape and form to enable it to continue till eternity. Therefore, to play with death and to bear hardships with cheerfulness are for a Muslim a deep-seated religious conviction, especially when hardships are undergone for the sake of his nation, his religion and for the protection of his ideals.

The strains and stresses to which the Muslims were subjected soon after the birth of Pakistan were not new to them: they have been facing trials all through their history. The Hindus, on the other hand, could never credit any nation with the strength and fortitude to withstand such calamitous onslaughts. Still less did they credit Pakistan with the capacity to take in her stride the shock wave of the unprecedented mass immigration of six million refugees. The continued survival of Pakistan under these cricumstances was to the Congress an anathema. Pakistani Muslims not only lived, but grew from strength to strength, and this period proved to be as yet the brightest one in their political life.

The economic position

What gave the Hindu leaders impish satisfaction was their belief that Muslims, poor in economics, were incapable of balancing the economy of their new State. Pakistan, in their estimation, would have such a small income and the purchasing power of her people would be so low that she could never muster up a strong defence to match with India's. It would be possible, so they thought, that without waging a regular war against Pakistan they could paralyse her

by creating an economic crisis out of which she could never emerge. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel both very often referred to such a possibility in their speeches and used to say that even if Pakistan herself requested merger with India they would never accept it. They were hinting thereby that Pakistan, driven to despair, would sooner or later beg for reunion with India.

As part of their conspiracy to undo Pakistan, the Indian Government withheld from Pakistan the amount of her share, some 56 crores, in the Reserve Bank of India. This money, under the financial arrangements made before Partition, was due to be paid to Pakistan simultaneously with the transfer of power. But Patel, in freezing the amount, found it an admirable token to add to Pakistan's economic difficulties as a preliminary to her total economic collapse. So the mask was off; the Indian Government threw all cannons of justice to the winds; and the world witnessed the spectacle of Indian narrow-mindedness stooping to the depths of denying Pakistan her legal share of the moneys agreed to mutually between the Congress and the League leaders.

Maulana Azad rightly asserts that the Congress never really accepted Partition with a clear conscience. It used all methods to weaken and, if possible, destroy the new State. Under a carefully nurtured plan all Hindu bankers, tradesmen, and industrialists were forced by the Congress to leave Pakistan with their money and liquid assets. The New Delhi *Statesman* in September 1947, reported under the caption "Flight of Capital from Lahore" that this city had, in one month, been drained of Hindu migrating assets

totalling Rs. 90 crores. The object was to deprive Pakistan of all financial resources and of the experience of trade and industry, as a result of which banking and commercial institutions would be closed and the ease-loving Muslims and their arm-chair politicians left with nothing but second thoughts on the advisability of running a bankrupt country.

There is no doubt that in the beginning Congress intrigues worked with frightful potency. Money started flowing out of Pakistani banks to India, the Nizam of Hyderabad refused to extend facilities for a loan, and the refugees, who were allotted shops, industrial and other commercial concerns, had absolutely no experience of working them. They knew as little about imports and exports as about banking and commercial transactions. In the first few months the markets and *mandis* were in a state of confusion, consumer goods were not available and the new merchants did not know the prices and qualities of stocks given to them.

But in the midst of this uncertainty circumstances created by India herself wrested order out of chaos. The Muslims of Junagadh State, Kathiawar, Bombay and Ahmadabad, with great financial resources and business and industrial experience, who were virtually turned out by India, crossed into Pakistan. They were followed by Muslims from Delhi, western U. P. and other parts of India, rich in commercial experience, and they took control of the situation. Gradually they set commercial, banking and industrial affairs right and passed on their experience to the others. New banks were opened, big industrial concerns were established and in no time all shops and markets

were full of provisions and stores. Once again, the Congress leaders were frustrated. From the very beginning Pakistan's exports exceeded its imports and thus she was able to show a favourable trade balance in the first seven months. According to the statistics of "British Industries Fair Review" Pakistan's exports for the period from August 15, 1947 to March 31, 1949, were 42.06 lakhs of rupees. In the second period from July 1948 to June 1949 the seaborne exports were 1,77,27 lakhs of rupees, and the imports, 1,28,60 lakhs of rupees. Thus, a favourable balance of 28,18 lakhs for the first period and of 48,67 lakhs of rupees for the second period was shown.

After Partition, Pakistan depended for essential imports on India, especially in cloth, sugar and coal. Pakistan monopolized raw jute production, but all jute mills were in Calcutta. In order to destroy the jute cultivators of East Pakistan and to dictate her own price terms India stopped purchasing jute from Pakistan. Here, too, she met with failure because Pakistan not only installed her own jute mills of modern design and of much heavier capacity than India's, she also became, in a few years, self-sufficient in sugar and cloth, partly through foreign imports but mostly through her own production. Pakistan's progress exceeded the most sanguine speculations of her own people. But to India it was nothing short of a nightmare. Far from falling into the abyss created for her by India, Pakistan had emerged economically stronger from her trials, and with the years grew into a formidable competitor of India in the foreign markets.

To quote Symonds (in 1949):

The Pakistan Government's finances show a

steady improvement over the past two years. At the time of Partition, the position was precarious. An interim budget, based on the assets and liabilities which had been taken over from the current Indian budget, showed a deficit of 234,000,000 rupees in the period August 1947 to March 1948. Moreover, India was reluctant to hand over Pakistan's share of the cash balances. To meet the emergency a loan was raised within Pakistan. This was enthusiastically oversubscribed, women even offering to pawn their jewellery to the Government. The budget for the year 1948-49 showed a slight surplus, however. In fact, the revised estimates at the end of he period proved it to be larger than expected. The budget for the current year 1949-50 anticipates another surplus, although expenditure has been considerably increased.[1]

Later, he writes:

Two years is an early age at which to assess the prospects of a nation, but from the rough-sketch which has been given it seems that Pakistan's economy is soundly based on an agricultural surplus and on cash crops which have at present a ready market. Her budgets have been balanced and her balance of trade favourable. Though her industries are scanty, her potential resources of power are considerable, and she welcomes foreign investment. Constitutionally, she has preserved democratic institutions in a time of grave emergency. She repudiates the suggestion that she is a theocratic state, for there are no priests in Islam; but she does claim to be an Islamic state, and the economic and social implications of this claim have yet to be seen. Her army has maintained the high traditions of the former Indian Army, and her civil services, in spite of individual failings, have carried the central and

1 Symonds, p. 116.

provincial administrations through a period of great strain.

Pakistan has proved itself viable, and to have a useful and dignified place in the world, provided external factors do not intervene.[1]

The East and West Wings

One of the pious hopes entertained by the Congress was that the distance separating East from West Pakistan, and East Pakistan's unusual geographical position will foster separatist tendencies between the two wings of Pakistan. It believed that provincial feelings in Sind, the Punjab and the Frontier province of West Pakistan and the cultural and linguistic differences and economic disparity between East and West Pakistan will never permit stability and unity in the country. Congress finances, press and publicity were, therefore, bent on creating feelings of hatred in East Pakistan against the Western wing. Millions of rupees were spent on propaganda. The linguistic question and the Urdu-Bengali controversy was fully exploited by Indian propagandists to create bitterness between Bengalis and non-Bengalis and the whole issue was given a political colour.

In West Pakistan provincial feelings in the garb of movements for Pakhtoonistan and Sindistan reared their ugly heads through the strenuous efforts of erstwhile Congress Muslim leaders. For quite some time, especially after power slipped from the hands of Muslim League, anti-Pakistan forces gained control of the Government. But come what may, Muslim unity and ideology remained largely unimpaired. The Congress leaders, as before, were disillusioned and

1 Symonds, p. 193.

their hopes of Pakistan succumbing to the adversity of geography and economy were shattered. They had considered geography, economy and culture to be the real foundations of unity. They were unaware that there is a much stronger and more enduring link which binds the Muslims—the link of faith and belief in the Unity of God. The Congress failed to appreciate the basic sense of organization among and character of the Muslims. Obviously, therefore, its plans and programmes were foredoomed to failure, and Pakistan continued to grow stronger day by day.

Errors of Muslim League leadership

The Pakistan Movement was very well organized and carefully planned. History can provide few parallels to the campaign launched by Muslim leadership for the consolidation and independence of Muslims from 1937 to 1947. Like the alert engine driver who takes his train through valleys and over narrow turnings, without mishap or inconvenience, to its destination, the Muslim League took forward its movement to the last milestone without injury to its adherents. In fight and in peace, inside the Assembly and at the conference table, it defeated its enemy hands-down. It fought the battles of negotiations, discussions and arguments, and of organization and active struggle with superb intelligence. What the Congress achieved in fifty years it covered in ten. But as politics after June 3, 1947, passed from the stage of diplomacy to that of solid administration, the Muslim League made serious mistakes in the two or three months following the announcement of the Partition plan. As a result, the newly-created State had to go through a tough time.

The supreme League leader, Quaid-i-Azam Jinnah, abhorred intrigues and dishonest dealings. He believed that the compromise affected between the Muslim League and the Congress would be implemented with sincerity by Congress leaders. Sincere himself, he did not visualize that agreements solemnly made could be subjected to political intrigues and diplomatic manoeuvring. He thought that the division of the country brought about with the consent of both the communities would be implemented and reciprocated, little realizing that, to Congress leaders, partition was a farce, that they had plotted to undo it from the very first day. He knew little about the secret deals which the Congress was making with the Labour Party to nip Pakistan in the bud.

The Muslim League leadership completely ignored this aspect and accepted without hesitation the schedule laid down by the Congress and Mountbatten for the transfer of power. According to the original declaration of the Labour Prime Minister in the British Parliament the complete transfer of power was to take place on June 20, 1948, but Lord Mountbatten suggested to the Muslim League that the original date be changed to August 15, 1947. The revised programme, prepared by Mountbatten in full consultation with the Congress leaders with a definite object, was accepted *in toto* by the Muslim League.

After June 3, 1947, the Muslim League Working Committee as a whole was virtually suspended. Representatives of the minority provinces had practically ceased to be invited to the conferences of the Muslim League which were held from time to time for considering political and administrative questions.

All decisions regarding the division of the country and other related matters were taken by the Muslim League representatives of the Interim Government or the members of the Working Committee representing the majority provinces. Since 1937 Nawab Muhammad Ismail Khan and Chaudhry Khaliq-uz-Zaman had been, without any break, members of the League Working Committee. These two leaders not only possessed great foresight, shrewdness and administrative experience; they had also the courage to differ with the Quaid-i-Azam if they found him wrong. With few exceptions, Muslim leaders had developed an implicit faith in the leadership of the Quaid-i-Azam. From experience they had come to believe and, to some extent rightly, that Mr. Jinnah could not be entrapped by his enemies. Such an attitude on the part of his followers makes a leader impervious to introspection and discourages criticism and advice by his followers. No one, however great, is infallible. That is why mutual discussion and consultation is one of the fundamental principles of Islam.

After June 3 and especially after the bifurcation of the Working Committee into two parts and the exclusion of the members of the minority provinces from its deliberations, the burden of thinking, planning and taking decisions rested with one man only. None dared point out to him the difficulty of dividing a vast country into two independent States within two and a half months. It was impossible to divide the army, stores, records, the Reserve Bank and other assets in just seventy-two days. The boundaries of the new State of Pakistan were not pre-defined and the Muslim League leadership did not know how these

boundaries would finally emerge.

What was feasible and practical was to transfer power in two stages; first, on August 15, the country should have been divided into two regional administrative units, without transferring final powers. For the transitional period law and order should have been the responsibility of the British Government. Final powers in the second stage should have been transferred on June 20, 1948, as originally planned. Both regions for the interim period should have been put under the control of a common Governor-General who could arbitrate over the division of assets and stores, army and finances. Independent control of Pakistan should have flowed naturally from the demarcation of its boundaries and the full possession of the assets falling to her share.

At one time Mr. Jinnah himself had such a scheme in view. On February 29, 1944, the correspondent of *News Chronicle*, had asked Mr. Jinnah in an interview:

> But surely there would be a civil war. You would be creating an Indian Ulster which the Hindus might one day attack in the name of united India.

Mr. Jinnah's reply was:

> I do not agree; but there would be under the new Constitution a transitional period for settlement and adjustment during which time British authority, so far as armed forces and foreign affairs are concerned, would remain paramount. The length of the transitional period would depend on the speed with which the two peoples and Great Britain adjusted themselves to the new Constitution.[1]

1 *Times of India*, March 2, 1944.

The reason why Mr. Jinnah changed his views and fell in with Mountbatten's changed programme is not known. It could be that delay might have killed the whole scheme of division on account of British and Hindu antagonism. Certainly, official circles in Delhi and London clung to the view that delay could have wrecked the plan on account of uncertain political conditions. This view on the part of the British is understandable, pressed as they were by international opinion to part with power one way or another. But in resolving the communal problem the extraordinary haste was fatal from the point of view of Pakistan. Once the Independence Act had been passed in Parliament the creation of the two independent States was a *fait accompli*. It would have been difficult to sabotage the scheme afterwards, especially when the power and strength of the Muslim League was well known. Such a sabotage would have led to civil war in India, a possibility which neither the British nor the Congress could view with equanimity. Muslim unity and organization which had already compelled the British Government and the Congress to agree to partition were the best guarantee of the implementation of the scheme of complete transfer of power ten months later.

Lord Birdwood has analysed this aspect of the situation in a very clear and forthright fashion. He writes:

> For a moment let us indulge in the luxury of wisdom after the event. Name a date for partition, not two and a half months but at least six months ahead of the first decision. Arrange Some political thinkers hold forth on the advis- orders for six months after the setting up of the

two new States. Place a Boundary Force on the frontiers, not of one Division, but of a Corps made available from the Army, with British troops sharing the responsibility in large numbers. Set up a Boundary Commission to publish its award at least two months previous to partition. Make all arrangements to register and remove those millions who desire to be removed. Carry through the exchange of populations to a time-table elaborated with all the precision of a "D" Day operation. Finally, divide the Army, with the retention of British troops until the last moment. Only some plan on such a scale could have rescued the north of India from the misery in which it was to be engulfed. Nor need it in any way have jeopardised the passing of constitutional power on the named date. Many reasons have been advanced for the unreality of a Master Plan. But one, at least, requires to be questioned. It is said that it would have been impossible to retain British troops in the country. In England the public were pressing for their return, while in India the constitutional position would have involved placing troops of the British Army under Indian and Pakistani orders. The first reason is a lamentable reflection on the judgment of the British public, assuming that they could and should have been informed of the issues at stake. As to constitutional questions of command, had the conduct of a plan been made the responsibility of an Army answerable to neither Dominion, but to His Majesty's Government, for the period involved, there could have been no doubts.[1]

All that has been suggested by Lord Birdwood could have been done only if power was transferred in two stages, the date of final transfer of power remaining the same as originally scheduled.

[1] Birdwood, p. 37.

Some political thinkers hold forth on the advisability of the two States having a common Governor-General even after partition and they name Lord Mountbatten for the job. This is an erroneous view. Apart from other things, the practical difficulty of sharing the Defence secrets of two independent States, inimical to each other, and of equitably adjusting his own mental processes between them would have been more apparent to the common Governor-General himself than to the two concerned States. His role would have been ineffectual. In the case of the creation of two sovereign states a common and neutral Governor-General, in the words of Lord Birdwood, "would certainly have needed to live within his own self-made enclave of neutral territory". The opposite, however, would have been the case if a Governor-General was shared for the interim period with two caretaker governments, the responsibility for law and order resting with the British Government, the Governor-General playing a certainly useful role as an arbitrator. Such a plan would have had the added advantage of preventing bloodshed, loot and murder of innocent people. The police and the army working directly under the Governor-General would have lent its powerful weight to stop large-scale disorder and riots and the transfer of power would have proceeded more peacefully.

It is a wonder that while the whole world was aware of the designs and intentions of the Sikhs and the Hindus for the mass emasculation of the Muslims, the Muslim League was not ready with measures to counteract the danger. This was because in the circumstances created by the abrupt and hasty trans-

fer of power it was helpless. Its fundamental mistake was not its inability to combat Sikh and Hindu violence but to agree to the changed programme proposed by Mountbatten. Whatever followed was in the logic of things. After partition the Muslim League was entirely powerless to stop the post-partition holocausts. Its next mistake was its failure to protect the Muslim minorities left in India and to find a satisfactory solution for them. The Lahore "Pakistan Resolution" was composed of two parts. The June 3 Plan was in consonance with the first part. The second part, which related to the rights of the Muslim minorities, was left untouched. It was expected originally that in the transitional period under a common Governor-General both the regional governments would frame their constitutions by which the rights of the minorities would be protected through effective safeguards under statutory provisions. If, before the final transfer of power, both countries had agreed to come to terms on the question of the minorities, and if the minorities were provided with Fundamental Rights envisaged in the Atlantic Charter to be implemented under the aegis of the U.N., there was a possibility that the grievances of the minorities might have been redressed. Though subsequent events have proved that the U.N. is not an effective institution in matters relating to the internal affairs of sovereign states there is no doubt that with the U.N. on the scene the minorities could draw upon the moral strength provided by it, and in case of difficulty could appeal to international conscience.

The Muslim League leaders were not impervious to the needs of the Muslim minority left back in

India. Their main policy was that by providing the Hindu minorities in Pakistan effective safeguards in Pakistan's own constitution they could reasonably expect reciprocity for Muslim rights in India. However, the unexpected mass migration of Sikhs and Hindus of West Pakistan to India altered the whole situation and the idea of helping Indian Muslims through constitutional safeguards could not reach fruition. Such an idea would have succeeded only through constitutions drawn up by both the governments in the ten months which they would have had if the original plan to transfer power on June 20, 1948, had been adhered to.

As a result of the change of programme Pakistan could not play its proper role in the matter of the affiliation of Indian States. Many States of Rajputana such as Jaisalmir and Jodhpur and some of the Punjab States were desirous of acceding to Pakistan. Some major States like Bharatpur, Alwar, Gwalior and Bhopal were planning to evolve a third block, that of the Indian States, with direct affiliation to the British Commonwealth. If given a time-lag of 10 months these States, free from fear of Indian Police action, could have taken decisions on their future independently. But with India fully seized of power, the Indian States were mince-meat before her, with Mountbatten and the Congress leaders fully exploiting this weakness. Pakistan then had not yet organized her army and could not possibly go to the aid of the Indian States. Taking full advantage of the situation, India captured Kashmir and Junagadh and later forced Hyderabad through a "Police action" to surrender. These events disillusioned the other Indian

States and they had no alternative to joining India, though much against their will. Thus Pakistan was isolated from all sides and deprived of a chance to get what was her due.

By far the greatest mistake which the Muslim League leaders made lay in their agreeing to widen the scope of the terms and basis of the division of the country. It was on the basis of the majority of Hindus and Muslims in particular territories that the division of the country was to be made, but on the suggestion of Lord Mountbatten and Congress leaders the Muslim League agreed to take into consideration "other factors" also.

The terms of reference of the Commission were as follows:

> To demarcate the boundaries of the two parts of the Punjab on the basis of ascertaining the contiguous majority areas of Moslems and non-Moslems. In doing so, it will take into account other factors.

Simultaneously, they agreed to entrust all powers of final arbitration to a Commission, which was drawn neither from the Privy Council nor from any international source, but was presided over by a British Judge, Mr. Radcliffe. In the first instance, after the principle of division was settled there was no need for arbitration in matters secondary to the division. A notional division could be arranged on the basis of majority areas. Controversial matters could be resolved through negotiations and discussions failing which the dispute could be referred to a committee of the U.N. But the Muslim League leadership, trusting to the last, never attributed to a British Judge qualities other than that of the highest integrity. They

ignored the fact that with the British, diplomacy and political expediency have always ruled the day. The British Government always framed their policies according to the needs of the hour. Their judges were judicially independent, but subject to the national policies. The fact that Mountbatten and the Labour Party were all out to help the Congress was completely ignored, and the Muslim League leaders gave their approval to the Radcliffe Award in advance, surrending all rights of appeal. Difference of opinion among the Hindu and Muslim members of the Commission was made inevitable on account of interpretation of the term "other factors", and in the end Mr. Radcliffe was made the sole arbiter of the two countries' destinies. Mr. Radcliffe himself refers to this difference in his report in the following words:

> . . . . Differences of opinion as to the significance of the term 'other factors', which we were directed by our terms of reference to take into account and as to the weight and value to be attached to those factors made it impossible to arrive at any agreed line.

The result was that Pakistan was deprived of Kashmir and the canal waters. The term "other factors" gave Mr. Radcliffe an unlimited scope and latitude for interpretation which he lavishly utilised in favour of India.

Notwithstanding all this, it is difficult to attribute motives to the Muslim League leadership and to condemn it for any harm that accrued to Pakistan through its policies because these were designed at least to secure the maximum good of the nation and the country. The most that can be critically ascribed to the Muslim League are some crucial errors of

judgment. The Muslim people will always be proud of their leadership because everything it did was in the interests of honesty, justice and righteousness. As time passes, the fact becomes increasingly apparent, that leaders of the calibre of Mr. Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan are not born every day. Their mistakes were the mistakes of honesty and righteousness; their virtues were their own. And as the former disappears into the limbo of Time, what remains is the great and ineffaceable master-piece—Pakistan—to hold aloft the principles and ideals for which Jinnah and Liaquat fought and for which, each in his turn, laid down his life.

CHAPTER XII

MAULANA AZAD'S OPPOSITION TO PAKISTAN

MAULANA AZAD's persistent opposition to the Pakistan demand till the last moment is a well-known fact of history. One, who had sided with the Indian National Congress in 1928 on the issue of the Nehru Report, which was unanimously condemned by the Muslim League, the Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Hind and the Ali Brothers, could hardly be expected to support the Muslim demand for a separate state. It is, however, not his opposition to the Muslim demand for an independent state which shocked and surprised the Muslim so much as the reasons which he forwarded in support of his attitude.

These he lists in his *India Wins Freedom* thus:

> On 15th April, 1946, I issued a statement dealing with the demands of Muslims and other minorities. Now that the division of India is a fact and ten years have passed, I again look at the statement and find that everything I had then said has come about. I feel I should quote it. This is what I said then and would still say:
>
> "I must confess that the very term Pakistan goes against my grain. It suggests that some portions of the world are pure while others are

impure. Such a division of territories into pure and impure is unIslamic and a repudiation of the very spirit of Islam. Islam recognizes no such division and the Prophet says, 'God has made the whole world a mosque for me'.

"Further, it seems that the scheme of Pakistan is a symbol of defeatism and has been built up on the analogy of the Jewish demand for a national home. It is a confession that Indian Muslims cannot hold their own in India as a whole and would be content to withdraw to a corner specially reserved for them.

"One can sympathise with the aspiration of the Jews for such a national home, as they are scattered all over the world and cannot in any region have any effective voice in the administration. The condition of Indian Muslims is quite otherwise. Over 90 millions in number they are in quantity and quality a sufficiently important element in Indian life to influence decisively all questions of administration and policy. Nature has further helped them by concentrating them in certain areas.

"In such context, the demand for Pakistan loses all force. As a Muslim I for one am not prepared for a moment to give up my right to treat the whole of India as my domain and to share in the shaping of its political and economic life. To me it seems a sure sign of cowardice to give up what is my patrimony and content myself with a mere fragment of it.

"As is well known Mr. Jinnah's Pakistan scheme is based on his two-nation theory. His thesis is that India contains many nationalities based on religious differences. Of them the two major nations, the Hindus and Muslims, must as separate nations have separate states. When Dr. Edward Thompson once pointed out to Mr. Jinnah that Hindus and Muslims live side by side in

thousands of Indian towns, villages and hamlets, Mr. Jinnah replied that this in no way affected their separate nationality. Two nations, according to Mr. Jinnah, confront one another in every hamlet, village and town, and he, therefore, desires that they should be separated into two states.

"Let us consider dispassionately the consequences which will follow if we give effect to the Pakistan scheme. India will be divided into two states, one with a majority of Muslims and the other of Hindus. In the Hindustan State there will remain 3½ crores of Muslims scattered in small minorities all over the land. With 17 per cent in U. P., 12 per cent in Bihar and 9 per cent in Madras, they will be weaker than they are to-day in the Hindu majority provinces. They have had their homelands in these regions for almost a thousand years and built up well-known centres of Muslim culture and civilization there.

"They will awaken overnight and discover that they have become aliens and foreigners. Backward industrially, educationally and economically, they will be left to the mercies of what would then become an unadulterated Hindu *raj*."[1]

The crux of the matter, however, was that at that juncture there were only two courses open to the Muslims. They could either remain dispersed all over the subcontinent and be at the mercy of the Hindu majority, in the same way as the unfortunate thirty-five millions of them are today or they could get concentrated in a limited and small portion of the subcontinent and establish there an independent state of their own. Of these two courses, Maulana

1 *India Wins Freedom*, pp. 142-4.

Azad favoured the first; the Muslims, however, preferred the latter.

Muslims of minority provinces

In favouring the first course, the Maulana and people of his ilk seemed to ignore the one basic fact that even in case of Akhand Bharat (United India), the population and position of the Muslims in the minority provinces would have remained the same. The unity of India could have neither increased their numbers nor strengthened them politically. The question, then, is: how could their condition be improved if Muslims in bondage totalled ten crores instead of three crores and a half ? Furthermore, when the Muslims could never form a majority, at the Centre, how could their homes and cultural centres of over one thousand years be protected in a united India?

Today, seven crores of Muslims in Pakistan are independent and free, and they are in a position to help their brethren in distress across the border morally, if not materially. If they are strong enough they can also fight for them. They can at least appeal to the conscience of the world against the oppressions and tyrannies to which the Bharati Muslims are being subjected. They can approach the United Nations and can take other effective steps such as the Liaquat-Nehru Pact (1950) to protect and help them. But what would have happened if the Muslims of Pakistan were also under a common centre? How could they, without an independent army, without any international status and with no effective and free voice, be of any help to their brothers? Instead of giving any relief or succour to the Muslims of minority provinces,

they would have been themselves victims of Hindu imperialists. If the subjugation of the Pakistani Muslims to the Hindu-dominated centre of undivided India could in any way be of any help to the present Indian Muslims, Maulana Azad's theory could have carried some weight. But the fact of the matter is that under a common centre the latter's position would have been far more miserable and pitiable. Now, there is at least some hope of their salvation.

Provincial autonomy—a ruse

Maulana Azad has laid great emphasis on the autonomy and internal freedom of the provinces, which he claims to have secured for the Muslim majority provinces from the Congress High Command. He writes:

> The formula which I have succeeded in making the Congress accept secures whatever merit the Pakistan scheme contains while all its defects and drawbacks are avoided. The basis of Pakistan is the fear of interference by the Centre in Muslim majority areas as the Hindus will be in a majority in the Centre. The Congress meets this fear by granting full autonomy to the provincial units and vesting all residuary power in the provinces. It has also provided for two lists of Central subjects, one compulsory and the other optional, so that if any provincial unit so wants, it can administer all subjects itself except a minimum delegated to the Centre. The Congress Scheme, therefore, ensures that Muslim majority provinces are internally free to develop as they will, but can at the same time influence the Centre on all issues which affect India as a whole.
>
> The situation in India is such that all attempts to establish a centralised and unitary government are bound to fail. Equally doomed to

failure is the attempt to divide India into two States. After considering all aspects of the question, I have come to the conclusion that the only solution can be on the lines embodied in the Congress formula which allows room for development both to the provinces and to India as a whole. The Congress formula meets the fear of the Muslim majority areas to allay which the scheme of Pakistan was formed. On the other hand, it avoids the defects of the Pakistan scheme which would bring the Muslims where they are in a minority under a purely Hindu government.

I am one of those who consider the present chapter of communal bitterness and differences as a transient phase in Indian life. I firmly hold that they will disappear when India assumes the responsibility of her own destiny. I am reminded of a saying of Gladstone that the best cure for a man's fear of the water is to throw him into it. Similarly India must assume responsibility and administer her own affairs before fears and suspicions can be fully allayed.

When India attains her destiny, she will forget the present chapter of communal suspicion and conflict and face the problems of modern life from a modern point of view. Differences will no doubt persist, but they will be economic, not communal. Opposition among political parties will continue, but they will be based, not on religion but on economic and political issues. Class and not community will be the basis of future alignments and policies will be shaped accordingly. If it be argued that this is only a faith which events may not justify I would say that in any case the nine crores of Muslims constitute a factor which nobody can ignore and whatever the circumstances, they are strong enough to safeguard their own destiny.[1]

1 *Ibid.*, pp. 144-5.

The question, however, is whether such an autonomy was promised and promulgated for the people of Indian States or not? Was not a formal announcement made in Parliament by the Labour Prime Minister while presenting the Indian Independence Act that as soon as the British paramountcy lapsed the states would be free to choose their own course of action? Were assurances not given to those Indian States who made "Standstill Agreements" with the Union of India that their internal freedom would be guaranteed? And was not such a guarantee stipulated in the "Instruments of the Standstill Agreements"? But what was the fate of all such solemn pledges and pronouncements? Within a year or so of Indian independence, all the states were forced—either through Police Action or through a threat of Police Action, or through inspired and arranged agitations,— into merging with the neighbouring states and provinces and thus lose, much against their will, their separate existence.

A similar fate was bound to overtake the Muslim majority provinces also—sooner or later. Under the pretext of protecting the Hindu minorities, the Indian Union could at any time after independence use the Indian army to interfere in the internal affairs of the so-called autonomous Muslim provinces, impose its will upon their governments and people, and could even change their status. The autonomy of provinces was nothing but a ruse to allay the fears of the Muslims and to wean them away from the Muslim League and its ideology.

In Maulana Azad's plan of provincial autonomy as in all other forms of federation, Defence, Foreign

Affairs and Communication were to be controlled by the centre. Once the army was placed under the control of Hindus, the elimination of the pre-Partition proportion of the Muslims in the army would have been the first item on the Indian list of priorities, and the rest would have followed automatically. Foreign affairs being outside the jurisdiction of the provinces, they could not even make themselves heard to the outside world.

In the elections of 1946, the main issue was the creation of Pakistan. In this historic battle of the polls it is estimated that the Muslim League lost about 20 per cent to 25 per cent of the votes on account of the opposition of Maulana Azad and his supporters. Indeed, it was a severe blow to their national solidarity and in consequence, instead of the Pakistan of their dreams they got only a truncated Pakistan. Nevertheless, even this truncated state has provided the Muslims of Pakistan ample opportunities to establish and consolidate themselves. And had it not been for it, the Muslims in these territories would have suffered the same fate which has overtaken the Indian Muslims after Independence. For that matter, communal riots are still a recurring of phenomenon in India. No year has passed since Independence when they had not taken a heavy toll of Bharati Muslims in life and property. A politician by profession, the Maulana could afford to ignore this central, albeit unpleasant fact of the present Indian situation; but the historian of tomorrow would not.

Example of the Muslims of Spain

It is relevant to recall here the story of the extermination of Muslims in Spain. After the loss of

Cordova in 636 A.H., about three-fourths of the entire Muslim population of Spain came under the rule of the Christians. It was only the small kingdom of Granada which protected the lives of the Muslims in Christian Spain for over two hundred and fifty years. But after the fall of Granada in 997 A.H., the genocide of Muslims began and within a short period they were completely wiped out. The position of Pakistan is far more crucial than that of Granada; its strength not only sustains the Bharati Muslims but has also kept the whole of the Middle East outside the sphere of Indian influence.

The strength and stability of Pakistan and the survival of the Bharati Muslims are almost interdependent. Hence Maulana Azad's argument that after the creation of Pakistan the Muslims would be penned up within a corner of the subcontinent and the position of the Bharati Muslims would become untenable is patently erroneous. According to him, there was only one solution to the communal problem. Since three and a half crores of Muslims could never become free, the majority of seven crores of them should also remain in bondage.

Possibility of an Islamic order in a nationalist state

Maulana Azad was an eminent scholar and commentator of the *Qur'an*, and as far as the study of *hadith* and *fiqh* were concerned, he regarded himself, with some justification, as the successor of Shah Wali Allah. What, however, is difficult to understand is how he could ignore the basic difference between the two warring and mutually hostile concepts of Islam and infidelity. Nor does he explain how an Islamic state could be built on foundations other than the

teachings of the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*. Or, whether it would be lawful for the Muslims to accept as their Amir and obey the authority of a person or group of persons who arraign themselves against Islam. The Maulana, it seems, had deliberately ignored this problem.

Now, if it were possible to build a composite state on the basis of territorial nationalism for which Maulana Azad was prepared to pay any price, why should have the Prophet insisted on a separate Muslim State in Arabia rather than form a united Arab State? And this when the Arabs, whether Muslims or not, had in the Persian and Roman empires a common danger to their freedom. Why, again, did his successors, the Pious Caliphs, not allow the non-Muslims to share with them the Government of the caliphal territories? If an Islamic state could not be built on the basis of national or territorial patriotism in the days of the Prophet, how could we be expected to accept Maulana Azad's thesis for the union of Muslims with a non-Muslim people?

In view of these facts, it seems probable that the Maulana never cared to study the problem of Pakistan in the light of the Quranic teachings. He assessed the momentary factors no doubt, but only as a patriotic Hindustani. No wonder, the idea of partition did not appeal to him. And he stuck to this position till the last moment of his life.

Maulana Azad has also discussed this question from the geographical point of view. He says:

> Mr. Jinnah and his followers did not seem to realize that geography was against them. Muslims in undivided India were distributed in

a way which made it impossible to form a separate state in a consolidated area. The Muslim majority areas were on the north-west and the north-east. These two regions have no point of physical contact. People in these two areas are completely different from one another in every respect, except only in religion. It is one of the greatest frauds on the people to suggest that religious affinity can unite areas which are geographically, economically, linguistically and culturally different. It is true that Islam sought to establish a society which transcends racial, linguistic, economic and political frontiers. History has however proved that after the first few decades, or at most after the first century, Islam was not able to unite all the Muslim countries into one State on the basis of Islam alone.

This was the position in the past and this is the position today. No one can hope that East and West Pakistan will compose all their differences and form one nation. Even within West Pakistan, the three provinces of Sind, the Punjab and the Frontier, have internal incompatibility and are working for separate aims and interest.[1]

But in saying all this, the Maulana conveniently overlooked the obvious fact that if Pakistan is a geographical absurdity, the unity of India is a historical one. Geographically, India might be one entity, but its people were never a unified nation. Nor did they ever have an innate inclination to be united as one nation. And in founding a state or organizing a society it is not geography, but the desire and determination of the people to be one and inseparable that really matters. In the course of four thousand years preceding the advent of the Muslims in India, except under the rule of a few powerful monarchs, India was

1 *Ibid.*, p. 227.

never united under one central government. Let alone the far off Deccan, even the more accessible upper territories were never unified into a single compact country by Buddha, Rama or Krishna. The Muslims were the first power to attempt seriously to give unity to India. But, except during the reign of two or three Mughal and Pathan rulers, Deccan and Bengal were never integrated with the rest of India. Besides, the semblance of unity whenever it was achieved, was done through conquest, and what is more, every time it proved to be but temporary and short-lived. For, as soon as the grip of the ruler loosened, the country fell apart. During the one hundred and fifty years of British rule every effort was made to unite the country under a common British culture, language and system of government. But even the British had failed, and culturally and politically, the Punjab, Bengal, Gujrat and the Deccan were as far apart as ever.

In 1910, a British historian, Mr. Valentine Chirol expressed grave doubts about the so-called unity of India, and remarked:

> A few Indians may dream of a united India under Indian rule, but the dream is as wild today as that of the few European Socialists who dream of the United States of Europe. India has never approached to political unity any more than Europe has, except under the compulsion of a conqueror. For India and Europe are thus far alike that they are both geographically self-contained continents, but inhabited by a great variety of nations whose different racial and religious affinities, whose different customs and traditions, tend to divide them far more than any interests they may have in common tend to unite them. We have got too much into the habit of

> talking about India and the Indians as if they were one country and one people, and we too often forget that there are far more absolutely distinct languages spoken in India than in Europe; that there are far more profound racial differences between the Mahratta and the Bengalee than between the German and the Portuguese, or between the Punjabee and the Tamil than between the Russian and the Italian; that, not to speak of other creeds, the religious antagonism between Hindu and Mahomedan is often more active than any that exists today between Protestants and Roman Catholics, even, let us say, in Ulster; and that caste has driven into Indian society lines of far deeper cleavage than any class distinctions that have survived in Europe.[1]

Nor did Maulana Mohamed Ali had any faith in the oft-repeated slogan of the unity of India. With his characteristic courage and candour, he decried the slogan in the course of an article in the *Comrade* of January 14, 1911, and remarked:

> We have no faith in the cry that India is united. If India was united where was the need of dragging the venerable President of this year's Congress (Sir William Wedderburn) from a distant home? The bare imagination of a feast will not dull the edge of hunger. We have less faith still in the sanctimoniousness that transmutes in its subtle alchemy a rapacious monopoly into fervent patriotism. . .
>
> . . . So many efforts, well-meaning as well as ill-begotten, have failed in bringing unity to this distracted land, that we cannot spare even cheap and scentless flowers of sentiment for the grave of another ill-judged endeavour. We shall not make the mistake of gumming together pieces

1 Valentine Chirol, *Indian Unrest*, p. 323.

> of broken glass, and then cry over the unsuccessful result, or blame the refractory material. In other words, we shall endeavour to face the situation boldly, and respect facts, howsoever ugly and ill-favoured. It is poor statesmanship to slur over inconvenient realities, and not the least important success in achieving unity is the honest and frank recognition of deep-seated prejudices that hinder it and the yawning differences that divide.[1]

Nor did this basic fact of the Indian political situation escape the notice of the Joint Select Committee of the Parliament which in its Report affirms:

> India is inhabited by many races often as distinct from one another in origin, tradition and manner of life as are the nations of Europe. Two-thirds of its inhabitants profess Hinduism in one form or another as their religion, over 77 millions are followers of Islam; and the difference between the two is not only of religion in the stricter sense, but also of law and culture. They may be said, indeed, to represent two distinct separate civilizations. Hinduism is distinguished by the phenomenon of its caste which is the basis of its religious and social system and save in a very restricted field remains unaffected by contact with philosophies of the west; the religion of Islam on the other hand is based upon the conception of the equality of man.[2]

No less relevant it is to recall here what Maulana Azad himself had said on this basic question, in the pre-Khilafat period. According to him, the Muslim in his individual capacity cannot join any non-Muslim party, because he has no separate and independent existence of his own. In support of this thesis, he

1 Maulana Muhammad Ali, p. 624.

2 *Report of the Joint Select Committee on Indian Constitutional Reforms* (sessions 1933-34), Vol. I, Part I.

forwards the following explanation:

> According to the Quran, individuals have no separate existence from the collective existence or existence of a party. The existence and actions of individuals are meant to create a collective organization with their combination and collection. . . . This becomes explicitly clear when we consider the famous traditions of the Prophet in which the picture of the united nationalism of the Muslims is painted. It has been unequivocally stated therein that the nationality of Islam is not the name of scattered bricks, but of the wall as a whole.[1]

To Maulana Azad:

> The Jammat (party or organization) means a collection of individuals who have got a sense of unity and company, social intercourse and discipline. Unity means that individuals, in their everyday life, should not be scattered, but have similarity and resemblance of communal activity performed with united efforts, and that there is no disharmony or dichotomy between such activities. Company and friendship are at a higher level than mere union, and the mixing up of all elements, the third stage of an organization. This should be more qualitative than quantitative, i.e., different sets of individuals should be united together in such a manner that the temperament and disposition of one group should become the temperament and disposition of the other. It should not be that two persons whose dispositions, habits, capacities and abilities cannot be unified, are united. Whatever you might do to combine them, they will always remain separate like oil and water and poles asunder.[2]

Judging from his own standards, he goes on to

1 Maulana Azad, "Mas'ala'-i-Khilafat wa Jazirat-ul-Arab", in *Mazamin-i-Azad*.
2 Maulana Azad, "al-Hurriyat fil-Islam", *Mazamin-i-Azad*.

emphasize the differences of the lives of Muslims and non-Muslims thus:

> Behold! the difference between the life of a Muslim and a *Mushrik* (heathen, i.e., who associates others with God). A *Mushrik* would fear the stones, because he thinks they are gods; he fears the stars because they are gods; and he fears the bricks of old and dilapidated graves, as well. He fears human beings because he considers them gods. But the belief. of a Muslim is that except the Creator of the earth and the sky there is no other existence in the world to be feared.[1]

These extracts from the Maulana's writings prove convincingly and conclusively that the Muslims and Hindus could not form a united nation; consequently, there could be no possibility of a common Indian nationhood.

The ideological and theoretical aspects of this problem apart, from a purely practical and factual viewpoint real unity did not exist in India, even after partition. In spite of the influence of modern education and western culture for over a century, even the Hindus of various provinces could not so far succeed in forging among themselves a common nationhood on the basis of religion, language or culture. In fact, the loyalty and affection for Nehru's person and contempt for Pakistan are today the only cementing factors between the various provinces and the centre.

As late as September 12, 1960, in an article in the *Stateman*, Dr. Syed Mahmud, a great disciple and a life-long friend of Maulana Azad, who has been a member of the Congress High Command and a Minister, both in the Province and at the Centre, described how India is in the grip of fissiparous forces. He says:

1 *Ibid.*, p. 95.

As things have developed in India, a sense of frustration has taken hold of citizens, irrespective of the section of the people to which they belong or of any party affiliation. Little inclination seems to be displayed by them for service to the country. To make matters worse fissiparous tendencies have begun to be at work in our midst, thanks to the spirit of linguism, casteism and regionalism generated by political rivalries everywhere. I see no diminution of the spirit in the near future. Men of insight like Prof. Toynbee have read in the Reorganization of States on a linguistic basis the inevitable disintegration of the land. There is no doubt that even during the brief period of our independence, the country has made great progress in industrialization and social uplift. But the sense of frustration, vague though it may be and undefinable, is gathering strength among the general public.

The provincial jealousies, prejudices and differences, which so often manifest themselves in India, are by no means so acute in Pakistan. Between East and West Pakistan and between different parts of West Pakistan itself, differences of language and culture undoubtedly exist. But in West Pakistan, they are only nominal as Urdu is spoken and understood everywhere in the province. Nor are differences in dress and general way of living by any means very significant. However, had these parts of Pakistan been included in India, their differences with Madras, Gujrat and Maharashtra would have been infinitely greater. It should, therefore, hardly be a matter for surprise that these parts chose to unite among themselves rather than be coerced into an impracticable union with the rest of the subcontinent.

There are, of course, variations of language and

diet and of living between the two halves of Pakistan but these are dictated by the compulsive variations of soil and climate. Economically and politically, the people of East Pakistan are as determined to be independent of India as those of the West. The East Pakistan Muslims are acutely conscious of the history of their province during the last two hundred years. They are painfully aware of the fact how after the battle of Plassey, the Hindus, along with the imperialists of the East India Company and the British Government, tried to crush them for more than a century. Nor could they possibly forget how the Hindus occupied their estates, replaced them in government services and ousted them from their world famous trade and industry.

The instinct of self-preservation is thus sufficient to keep both wings of Pakistan together. Both realize the danger to the whole country if one is separated from the other. Moreover, ideological and religious unity and the common political principles and Islamic values which bind the two wings of the country, are infinitely stronger than geographical factors which separate them. The yearning for an Islamic order and Islamic laws overrides provincial boundaries. One wonders whether Indian provinces do also claim any such common frontiers?

The Maulana's theory that Islam could not unite different countries into a single state is a deliberate misrepresentation of history and belies his own earlier writings. Till the end of the first century, during the Banu Ummaiya period, all the Muslim countries were under a single central government on the basis of Islam alone. In fact, the basis for the

political union between Spain, India, Africa, Egypt and Arabia was nothing if not religion. If the people of such far off regions could remain united under one state merely on the basis of religious affinity for over a hundred years at a time when the means of communication were by no means as developed as to-day, one wonders why East and West Pakistan could not remain together today on the same basis.

In fact, till many centuries after the first century, A.H., the different regions in Asia, Africa and Europe remained tied to a central government on the basis of religion alone. In the first two centuries of the Abbassid rule, all Muslim countries, with the sole exception of Spain, remained bound to Baghdad. Even after this when the Khalifa's power waned and the Sultans got correspondingly strengthened, and new princes carved out kingdoms both in the east and the west, the great majority of Islamic countries remained bound to a centre due solely to religion. And when the institutions of the Caliphate and of the Sultanate merged into the strong Ottoman sultanate, it was religion alone that bound and united almost all the Muslim countries to it. During all this time geographical boundaries kept changing; the conception of the State and of the Government kept altering; dynasties of Sultans and Khalifas kept succeeding each other; linguistic, cultural and economic differences among countries kept cropping up,—but Islam's unifying bond of brotherhood prevailed over all these vicissitudes.

And what is more, it was on the same base that the Khilafat movement in India was constructed to which Maulana Azad himself made no mean contri-

bution. It may be quite pertinent to ask whether there was any point of physical contact between Muslim India and the Turkish Caliphate. Or, whether geographical and territorial considerations played any part in the Khilafat Movement which shook the foundations of the British Empire in India? It may also be asked as to what was meant by Maulana Azad's appeal of January 10, 1913 (which he addressed to the Indian Muslims, in sympathy with the Balkan Muslims and for the protection of Islam's holy places and cities. In that soul-stirring appeal, he had said:

> Certainly we (Muslims) broke the heads of the Christians during their eight crusades and we did not let them occupy the sacred *Bait-ul-Laham*. But to talk of this now is useless because if our lapses and our unprofitable lamentations continue in the same manner the day is not far when Christian guns would open up against the last preserve of our self-respect and life, namely, the final resting place of the Holy Prophet and against sacred Jerusalem; and moreover the coasts of Jeddah will be swarmed by Europe's steel-coated dreadnoughts. If today the *Kalma* of God's unity and eternity, the holy places and respect for the Islamic commandments is Turkey's greatest responsibility because her hand carries the sword, then you must believe that the responsibilities of the Muslims of India are no less because their number far exceeds the individual population of the world's Islamic countries.

This, however, is not an isolated instance of Maulana's theory of Muslim nationalism;—a theory which is divergent, in fact opposed to his thesis on territorial nationalism, which he preached in his post-Khilafat writings. He has also discussed on other occasions in considerable detail this question purely

from the Quranic point of view. Emphasizing the extra-territorial nature of Islam, for instance, he wrote in 1915:

> Actually, this is an indication that Noah's invitation was not towards the revival of a particular race or community but towards the creating of a new nation, rising above the present national and racial boundaries and is based on religious brotherhood. Such a community transcends geographical limits and becomes a universal brotherhood. Every piece of earth, every section of humanity and every race of people take refuge under the corner of its garments.[1]

Again, in 1916, he forcefully preaches the universal character of brotherhood and nationhood created by Islam. In an issue of *Al-Hilal*, dated November 6, 1916, the Maulana writes:

> It was man's greatest error and an act of his forgetfulness of God that breaking the ties of the unity of creation of human life he founded relationship based on pieces of territory and division of families. He turned the earth which was meant for love and unity into an arena of inter-communal differences and quarrels. But Islam is the first call in the world to proclaim an invitation to a universal order based not on man-made divisions, but on a unity founded on the worship of God.
>
> Thus, in Islam, country or home and differences of colour and language have no meaning. Certainly, it recognizes linguistic and colour differences as divine signs, but it does not recognize these differences as indicating human divisions. All worldly affiliations are man-made. The real affiliation is one and only one—that which binds man to his creator and upbringer.

1 *Al-Balagh*, November 12, 1915.

Therefore, those who subscribe to this affiliation must themselves become one even though they now remain separated by the fury of the seas, the heights of the mountains, the distances of the earth and the divisions of birth and heredity.

It was this very universal brotherhood and the invitation of Islamic unity which united far off places on earth. Islam reared itself in the deserts of Hejaz, but it was in the deserts of Africa that it proclaimed itself; its invitation arose from the valleys of the mountain of Boaqi-boos(?) but the cry "There is no Lord but Allah" resounded against the walls of China; exactly when history stood counting the imprints of Muslim feet on the banks of the Euphrates thousands of hands besides the Jamna were performing ablutions in preparation of prayer before the Almighty. All these different peoples of the world living in far off places were, in fact, inmates of the same house whom the diabolical internecine differences had torn apart and whom God had once again united under a perpetual peace. And he united their hearts in a manner that they forgot all their previous grudges and mutual complaints and began sharing their sorrows and their joys like brothers.

This brotherhood is God-made. Anyone who acknowledged the precept, "God is one," entered this brotherhood, be he an Egyptian, an Algerian barbarian or a Turkish scholar from Constantinople. If he is a Muslim he is conscious only of a brotherhood founded on God's unity. He knows no home and no country. He regards the whole world as his home and its people his relations. Other worldly ties can break but Islamic ties, never. It is possible that a father may fall out with his son, a mother throw her child away from her lap and brothers turn enemies. It is also possible that relationships measured in blood

> heredity and love may snap. But there is no power on earth which can snap the ties which bind a Chinese Muslim to an African Muslim, a Bedouin Arab to a shephard of Tartary and a Muslim convert of India to a blue-blooded Qureish of the Holy Mecca. And there is no power that can break a chain wrought by the hands of God which has linked the universal Muslim mind with bonds of perpetuity.

Whatever the late Maulana might have said in the later part of his political life, his early writings formed the basis of the movement of Muslim nationalism, which ultimately culminated in the creation of Pakistan. The Maulana had, of course, every right to change his views and belief regarding the basis of nationhood, but facts cannot however be banished by ignoring them. History emphatically refutes the interpretation of events given by the Maulana on the role of Islam in uniting the Muslims on the basis of ideology. For that matter, the alleged failure of Islam in uniting diverse people under one state on the basis of religion, as the Maulana would have us believe, is not supported by facts.

APPENDIX

Pakistan Resolution passed at the Lahore Session of the All-India Muslim League, March 23, 1940

While approving and endorsing the action taken by the Council and the Working Committee of the All-India Muslim League, as indicated in their resolutions, dated the 27th of August, 17th and 18th of September and 22nd of October, 1939, and 3rd of February, 1940, on the constitutional issue, this Session of the All-Indian Muslim League emphatically reiterates that the scheme of federation embodied in the Government of India Act, 1935, is totally unsuited to, and unworkable in, the peculiar conditions of this country and is altogether unacceptable to Muslim India.

It further records its emphatic view that while the declaration dated the 18th of October, 1939, made by the Viceroy on behalf of His Majesty's Government is reassuring in so far as it declares that the policy and plan on which the Government of India Act, 1935, is based will be reconsidered in consultation with the various parties, interests and communities in India, Muslim India will not be satisfied unless the whole constitutional plan is reconsidered *de novo* and that no revised plan would be acceptable to the Muslims unless it is framed with their approval and consent.

Resolved that it is the considered view of this Session of the All-India Muslim League that no constitutional plan would be workable in this country or acceptable to the Muslims unless it is designed on the following basic principles, viz., that geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted, with such territorial readjustment as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority as in the North-Western and Eastern zones of

India should be grouped to constitute 'Independent States' in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign.

That adequate, effective and mandatory safeguards should be specifically provided in the Constitution for Minorities in these units and in the regions for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them, and in other parts of India where the Mussulmans are in a minority adequate, effective and manadatory safeguards shall be specifically provided in the Constitution for them and other Minorities for the protection of their religious, cultural, economic, political, administrative and other rights and interests in consultation with them.

The Session further authorizes the Working Committee to frame a scheme of constitution in accordance with these basic principles, providing for the assumption finally by the respective regions of all powers such as defence, external affairs, communications, customs and such other matters as may be necessary.

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